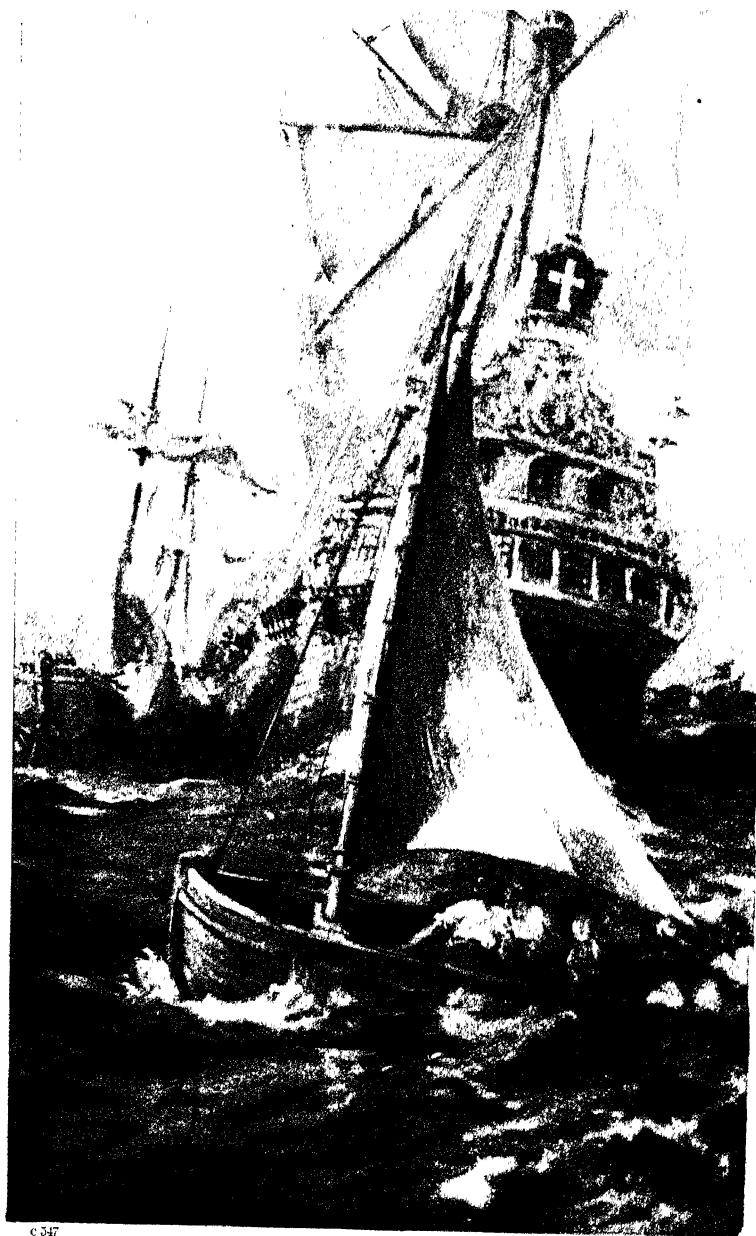




PIONEERS IN  
TROPICAL AMERICA



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AN ATTACK ON A SPANISH GALLEON

# PIONEERS IN 7 TROPICAL AMERICA

By SIR HARRY JOHNSTON

G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

*WITH FOUR COLOURED ILLUSTRATIONS  
BY CHAS. M. SHELDON*



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## PREFACE

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I HAVE been asked to write a series of works which should deal with "real adventures", in parts of the world either wild and uncontrolled by any civilized government, or at any rate regions full of dangers, of wonderful discoveries; in which the daring and heroism of white men (and sometimes of white women) stood out clearly against backgrounds of unfamiliar landscapes, peopled with strange nations, savage tribes, dangerous beasts, or wonderful birds. These books would again and again illustrate the first coming of the white race into regions inhabited by people of a different type, with brown, black, or yellow skins; how the European was received, and how he treated these races of the soil which gradually came under his rule owing to his superior knowledge, weapons, wealth, or powers of persuasion. The books were to tell the plain truth, even if here and there they showed the white man to have behaved badly, or if they revealed the fact that the American Indian, the Negro, the Malay, the black Australian was sometimes cruel and treacherous.

A request thus framed was almost equivalent

to asking me to write stories of those pioneers who founded the British Empire; in any case, the first volumes of this series do relate the adventures of those who created the greater part of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, by their perilous explorations of unknown lands and waters. In many instances the travellers were all unconscious of their destinies, of the results which would arise from their actions. In some cases they would have bitterly railed at Fate had they known that the result of their splendid efforts was to be the enlargement of an empire under the British flag. Perhaps if they could know by now that we are striving under that flag to be just and generous to all types of men, and not to use our empire solely for the benefit of English-speaking men and women, the French who founded the Canadian nation, the Germans and Dutch who helped to create British Africa, Malaysia, and Australia, the Spaniards who preceded us in the West Indies, and the Portuguese in West, Central, and East Africa, in Newfoundland and Ceylon, might—if they have any consciousness or care for things in this world—be not so sorry after all that we are reaping where they sowed.

It is (as you will see) impossible to tell the tale of these early days in the British Dominions beyond the Seas, without describing here and there the adventures of men of enterprise and daring who were not of our own nationality. The majority, nevertheless, were of British stock; that is to say, they were English, Welsh, Scots, Irish, perhaps here and there a Channel Islander and a Manxman;

or Nova Scotians, Canadians, and New Englanders. The bulk of them were good fellows, a few were saints, a few were ruffians with redeeming features. Sometimes they were common men who blundered into great discoveries which will for ever preserve their names from perishing; occasionally they were men of Fate, predestined, one might say, to change the history of the world by their revelations of new peoples, new lands, new rivers, new lakes, snow mountains, and gold mines. Here and there is a martyr like Marquette, or Livingstone, or Gordon, dying for the cause of a race not his own. And others again are mere boys, whose adventures come to them because they are adventurous, and whose feats of arms, escapes, perils, and successes are quite as wonderful as those attributed to the juvenile heroes of Marryat, Stevenson, and the author of *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

I have tried, in describing these adventures, to give my readers some idea of the scenery, animals, and vegetation of the new lands through which these pioneers passed on their great and small purposes; as well as of the people, native to the soil, with whom they came in contact. And in treating of these subjects I have thought it best to give the scientific names of the plant or animal which was of importance in my story, so that any of my readers who were really interested in natural history could at once ascertain for themselves the exact type alluded to, and, if they wished, look it up in a museum, a garden, or a natural history book.

I hope this attempt at scientific accuracy will not

frighten away readers young and old; and, if you can have patience with the author, you will, by reading this series of books on the great pioneers of British West Africa, Canada, Malaysia, West Indies, South Africa, and Australasia, get a clear idea of how the British Colonial Empire came to be founded.

You will find that I have often tried to tell the story in the words of the pioneers, but in these quotations I have adopted the modern spelling, not only in my transcript of the English original or translation, but also in the place and tribal names, so as not to puzzle or delay the reader. Otherwise, if you were to look out some of the geographical names of the old writers, you might not be able to recognize them on the modern atlas. The pronunciation of this modern geographical spelling is very simple and clear: the vowels are pronounced *a* = ah, *e* = eh, *i* = ee, *o* = o, *ô* = oh, *ô* = aw, *ö* = u in 'hurt', and *u* = oo, as in German, Italian, or most other European languages; and the consonants as in English.

H. H. JOHNSTON.

# CONTENTS

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CHAP.	Page
I. TROPICAL AMERICA AND THE SPANISH DISCOVERY OF AMERICA - - - - -	15
II. SPANISH PIONEERS IN TROPICAL AMERICA - - -	54
III. SPANIARDS REVEAL THE AMAZONS AND THE ORINOKO -	77
IV. RIVALS TO THE SPANIARD: HAWKINS, DRAKE, AND OXENHAM - - - - -	99
V. DRAKE ON THE COASTS OF SOUTH AMERICA - - -	114
VI. RALEIGH AND GUIANA - - - - -	144
VII. PIRATES AND BUCCANEERS - - - - -	183
VIII. DAMPIER AND THE LOGWOOD CUTTERS - - -	213
IX. DAMPIER, WAFER, AND THE PIRATE CAPTAINS - - -	239
X. DAMPIER'S SECOND VOYAGE TO THE PACIFIC COAST -	260
XI. DARIEN - - - - -	275
XII. BRITISH HONDURAS AND CENTRAL AMERICA - - -	287



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

---

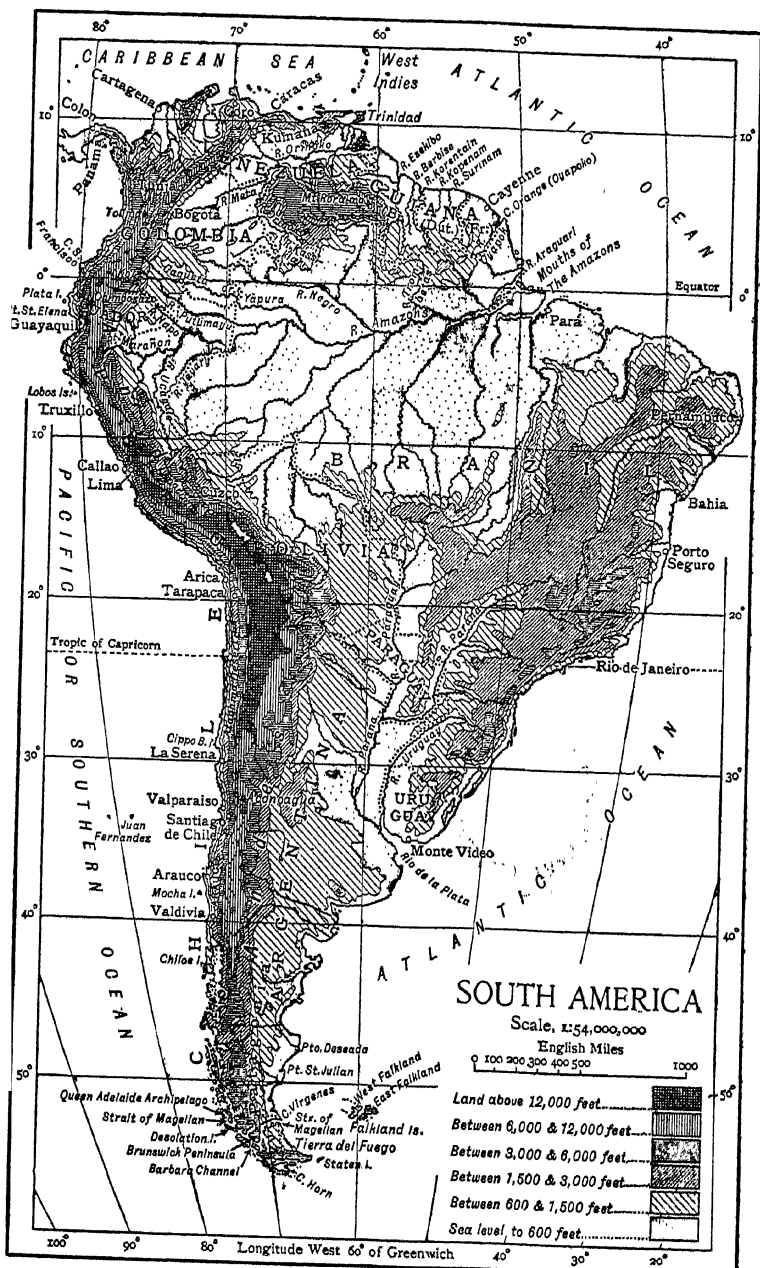
	Facing Page
An Attack on a Spanish Galleon - <i>Frontispiece in Colour</i>	
Jaguar and American Tapir and Young - - -	32
Carib Indians - - - - -	64
Indians of the Amazon - - - - -	80
Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins - - -	96
Coconut Palms - - - - -	112
Raleigh's Men on the Orinoko - - - <i>In Colour</i>	160
Sir Walter Raleigh and Captain William Dampier - -	176
Porto Bello: View of Modern Village from Old Spanish Fort - - - - -	208
A Chute for Mahogany Logs on an Estate near Vaca Falls	224
The Giant Tortoises of the Galápagos Islands <i>In Colour</i>	256
Cockburn and the Neapolitan among the Pirates <i>In Colour</i>	288

---

	Page
Map of South America - - - - -	13









# Pioneers in Tropical America

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## CHAPTER I

### Tropical America and the Spanish Discovery of America

THE desire to reach the mysterious islands and peninsulas of Southern Asia—"The Indies", the region of pepper, cloves, nutmegs, cinnamon, incense, sandalwood, and yewoods—by a western route, instead of the voyage round the Cape of Good Hope, which the Portuguese already claimed as their monopoly; or a journey through the Mediterranean and the Levant, hampered by the opposition of the Turks, Egyptians, and Venetians; prompted the Genoese Colombo (whom we call COLUMBUS and the Spaniards, Colon) to pilot two Spanish ships across the Atlantic Ocean from the Canary Islands to the Bahamas, and thence to Hispaniola and Cuba.

This was in the year 1492, seven years after the Portuguese had discovered the Cape of Good Hope. Columbus thought he had arrived on the outskirts of Asia, and possibly died in that belief fourteen years afterwards. The appearance and the condition of life of the gentle-natured Arawak Amerindians, the fierce valour of the cannibal Caribs, the superior culture of the clothed peoples of the

Central and South American mainland—with their stone cities and temples, their picture writing, feather-trimmed garments, worship of many deities, human sacrifices, and immoral customs, their plantations of maize and cacao—all recalled to the minds of the better-educated Spanish adventurers, still more to the well-read Columbus, the descriptions of the Malay peoples of Sumatra, Java, and the Malay Peninsula, the Burmese and Annamese, which had already reached Europe through the travels overland to the Far East of adventurous Italians in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.

It was probably not until about the year 1515 (by which time the Pacific or Southern Ocean had been sighted, or actually reached, from the Isthmus of Panamá) that German and Italian geographers realized the separate existence of the Americas. In 1519 the search for a western route to the real Indies was resumed by the Spanish Government, who sent out the Portuguese pilot, Magellan (Magalhães) to reach the "Spice Islands" of the Portuguese and Arabs after rounding the continent of South America.

Long afterwards, however, Tropical America was known to Spain as "Las Indias"—The Indies—and it was probably only the French and British who in the seventeenth century styled the lands round the Caribbean Sea the "West Indies". Gradually this name became restricted to the Greater and Lesser Antilles,<sup>1</sup> the main islands, large and small, of the Caribbean Sea and the

<sup>1</sup> Antilles was a Spanish name probably first used at the end of the fifteenth century and derived from "Antilia", the name given in medieval geography to half-mythical islands (confused with the Azores) lying west of Europe in the Atlantic. The Azores were discovered by the Genoese and Portuguese in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and named after the kites (Astures, Açores) which frequented them; so the Antilia had to be looked for farther to the west.

## The Spanish Discovery of America 17

Gulf of Mexico; while the term "Spanish Main" (*La Tierra Firme*) was applied to the regions of continental Central and South America. The Spaniards were a very long time before they adopted the word "America"—perhaps officially not till the end of the eighteenth century. "Las Indias" covered all the region they knew or cared about in the New World. The easternmost part of South America was known by the Portuguese name of Brazil, the region to the north of it as Guiana or Guayana (the French "Cayenne"); south of Brazil were Rio de la Plata and Patagonia; then, to the north-west, came the Viceroyalty of Peru (Chile, Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador), and north of that the provinces of Cundinamarca, New Granada and Venezuela, and the Presidency of Panamá; while all Central America and Mexico, New Mexico, and Texas were grouped under the title of "New Spain". Beyond New Spain the Spaniards were cognizant—after 1540—of "California",<sup>1</sup> which term covered all western North America, and of "Florida", the southern part of eastern North America.

The Spaniards and Portuguese found these lands and islands of Tropical America peopled by brown or yellow-skinned native races; with broad, prominent cheekbones, narrow and sometimes aquiline noses, large brown eyes, smooth-skinned bodies and beardless faces, and with head hair that was long and lank and usually a deep black in colour. Further details as to their physical features, and the diverse stages of culture in which they were living when first discovered by Europeans, are given in the latter part of this chapter.

The first Amerindians encountered by the Spaniards

<sup>1</sup> California, like Antilia, was the name of a mythical land of Romance, which figured in stories, masques, and plays of the early sixteenth century.

## 18      Pioneers in Tropical America

in their discovery of Tropical America in the memorable autumn of 1492 were the Lucayans of the Bahama Islands. These inoffensive people have been completely extinct for the last hundred and fifty years, though there are signs of their having lingered down to the end of the eighteenth century in the large and still somewhat unexplored island of Andros. The Lucayans were seemingly a branch of the Arawak group. Columbus found them an absolutely naked people, though they possessed cotton, yarn, and gold ornaments. Apparently they also used the brightly-coloured plumage of parrots for purposes of decoration. Their arms were wooden assagays. When the great Pioneer in American discovery reached Cuba on the 27th October, 1492, from his landfall at the Bahamas, he realized that the Arawaks of that large island were more civilized than the Lucayans. They were found to be inhaling the smoke from rolled cigars made of tobacco leaves.

Columbus passed on from Cuba to Hispaniola—the island which was afterwards the haunt of the Buccaneers, and now divided into the Spanish-speaking and French-speaking republics of Santo Domingo and Haiti. Here the natives were also—like those of Porto Rico farther east and Jamaica farther south—mainly of the Arawak group (originally from the Lower Orinoko and Northern Guiana).<sup>1</sup> Though going almost naked in the daytime, like the Lucayans, they nevertheless possessed clothing made of woven cotton, perhaps also of bark cloth. They cultivated the ground, and their principal food crop was manioc.<sup>2</sup> Their weapons consisted of bows and arrows, stone hatchets, axes, and clubs.

<sup>1</sup> There are traces, however, of other and older races in Cuba, Haiti, and Porto Rico, probably akin to the Maya stock of Yucatan and Honduras.

<sup>2</sup> Manioc—tapioca—is the root of two species of Euphorbias, *Manihot utilisima*,

## The Spanish Discovery of America 19

The people of Cuba, Porto Rico, and Jamaica were of much the same type, though the Borinkens of Porto Rico (at one time a thickly-inhabited island) were, like the Haitians, mixed with Carib blood. Those Borinkens (Borinquenños) had developed a considerable degree of art in the carving of stone, and had attained a much higher degree of civilization than the other Antilleans.

So much for the Greater Antilles, whose populations were almost entirely of the Arawak group, with occasional colonizations and invasions of marauding Caribs. But the Lesser Antilles, which stretch in a long chain from the Virgin Islands off Porto Rico to within sight of Venezuela and Trinidad, were inhabited mainly by Caribs, though there were traces here and there of former Arawak populations. These Caribs were as fierce and warlike as the Arawaks were gentle and non-resisting. They were remarkable, above all, to these early European pioneers, for their love of eating human flesh, in fact, the word "cannibal" is supposed to be a corruption of "caribal", and gradually took the place in European literature of renderings of the Greek word *Anthropophagoi*—"man-eaters". The Caribs, like the Arawaks, came from north-eastern South America, the regions between the delta of the Orinoko and the delta of the Amazon; in fact, they belong to one of the South American groups of Amerindians, rather than to the North or Central American types. They were—and are—as already mentioned, a handsome, well-grown people, with beautifully proportioned bodies, very like those of Europeans, while their

and *M. aipi*, natives of South America. The original wild plant, the "bitter manioc", has tuberous roots which contain in their outer rind a poisonous element (hydrocyanic acid), which must be first got rid of by baking, or by soaking the root in running water. But in Haiti the natives grew the sweet manioc (*M. aipi*) in which no doubt by long cultivation the poisonous acid had been got rid of.



faces were much more of the Caucasian type than those of the Arawaks, the Peruvians, the Brazilian Indians, or even the Redskins of North America. They had large sparkling eyes and somewhat hooked noses. Little else than their reddish-yellow skin colour, their somewhat prominent, broad cheekbones, and the lack of beard and moustache in the men, distinguished them from Southern Europeans. They soon conceived, however, an intensely bitter hatred towards the Spaniard, and, in fact, prevented the Spaniards from permanently occupying and retaining the islands of the Lesser Antilles; consequently opening a way for the conquest and colonization of the New World by the French, English, and Dutch. Otherwise Tropical America might have been for a much longer time closed to the pioneers of those nations by Spanish garrisons in the long chain of islands between Trinidad and Florida. [Trinidad itself was not peopled by Caribs, but by a gentler race, probably allied more to the Arawaks, a tribe of Amerindians which only died out in the nineteenth century.]

Before we proceed to review the adventures of the more remarkable amongst the pioneers in these regions of the West Indies and the Spanish Main, portions of which have since come within the British Empire, we might pass in review the geographical conditions of the lands bordering the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea, and the Equatorial Atlantic (besides the extremity of South America), and glance at their botany, zoology, and the condition of their aboriginal population before the White man arrived on the scene at the close of the fifteenth century.

At different times in earlier—though not very remote

## The Spanish Discovery of America 21

—periods of the earth's history there has been one very large island, as large as New Guinea, which has included the now scattered islands and islets of the Bahamas and the Greater Antilles—Porto Rico, Hispaniola, Jamaica, and Cuba. Jamaica has sometimes been detached from this and connected independently by an isthmus with the coast of Honduras, while the Cuba-Bahamas region to the north has been united with Yucatan. But although the peninsula of Florida now extends southwards to within quite a short distance of Cuba or the Bahama Islands, a good deal of Florida has only recently been elevated above the sea and has had much less connection with the West India Islands than was the case with Central America. At one time, indeed—perhaps two million years ago—there was probably a belt of land or a chain of closely connected islands, including the Bermudas group (now reduced to a few coral rocks), which stretched right across the Atlantic to north-west Africa, the Canaries, the Azores, and Portugal. And again, about the same time, or earlier, another peninsula or archipelago of islands practically united north-east Brazil with the western projection of Africa (Sierra Leone and Liberia). Across these two bridges, which may in some periods have been partly united, there came to Central and to South America the ancestors of most of their existing types of beast, bird, freshwater fish, insect, spider, and land shell, besides a large proportion of their plants and trees. Of course the connection, which was alternately broken off and reconstituted, between Central America and California likewise served as a pathway for an introduction into Tropical America of beasts, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, and plants from eastern Asia, while other things found their way across the Pacific by archipelagos of Pacific islands now sunk beneath the level of the ocean.

Much of Central America and the islands of the Gulf of Mexico is very volcanic, and owing to earth movements there have been great oscillations of level in recent times. There are lofty snow-crowned mountains in that tremendous range of the Andes (which rises abruptly from the seashore along all western South America to altitudes of over 20,000 feet) which have been at no great distance of time under the sea, and are coated with many feet of sediment derived from the powder of sea shells. In like manner portions of the great West India Islands have been under the sea and then raised up into hills, ducked again, submerged for an age or two, and once more lifted to the winds of heaven. It is probable, in fact, that the paucity of mammalian life and the absence of many families of birds from the West Indies is due to the violent changes which have taken place in the shape, size, and level of these islands, while no doubt from time to time there has been an appalling destruction of living forms from volcanic outbursts, compared to which those of Mont Pelé, devastating recently the Island of Martinique, were trifling. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as now, the earthquakes of Jamaica, Cuba, Hispaniola, Central and South America were as disturbing and destructive to life and landscapes as they have been in more recent times.

In nearly all the West India Islands, in Central America, and in northern and western South America, the surface, as compared to eastern North America, is very mountainous. Most of the mountains are active or extinct volcanoes, but there are also the great peaks of the Andes, many high tablelands, mountains, and hills which are not volcanic in origin, but are due to wrinkles and elevations of the earth's crust, carved by the action of water, wind, frost, and heat into peaks, domes, tablelands, and the saw-like

## The Spanish Discovery of America 23

ranges to which the Spaniards gave the characteristic name of "Sierra". The loftiest altitude in the West India Islands is the mountain usually called Loma de la Tina, in Hispaniola, which has a height of over 10,000 feet. The greatest heights in Central America and northern South America are found in south-west Guatemala (nearly 14,000 feet); in Costa Rica (11,600 feet); Panamá (11,700 feet); Colombia (Santa Marta, under 17,000 feet; Tolima, 18,500 feet, and several peaks and domes near Bogota over 18,000 feet in height); Ecuador (Chimborazo, 20,500 feet, and several other peaks over 20,000 feet in altitude); Venezuela (Picacho, 15,420 feet); and Guiana (Roraima, 8600 feet). A number of the loftier mountains of the mainland reach above the limit of perpetual snow, which in north Equatorial America is an average 15,000 feet above sea level. On the Andes, farther south in western South America, many peaks rise above 20,000 feet in altitude, the loftiest being Aconcagua in Chile (23,393 feet). In the ranges of the Andes, of course, from Ecuador southwards, there are glaciers (deposits of ice perpetually renewed by melting and freezing snow), and the climate of all this region facing the Pacific is much cooler than that of Brazil or eastern South America, partly also on account of the cold sea water which sweeps continually as a current from south to north, from the Antarctic seas to the Equator. Owing to this and other causes there is also a great dearth of rain along the western side of South America, so that, besides being much cooler, the climate is also much drier; therefore altogether much healthier for the White man than the steaming forests of Brazil, of Panamá, and Guiana. Much of the modern republic of Colombia is at a very lofty elevation, and there are plateaus with great cities on them at altitudes of

between 6000 and 9000 feet, where the climate is as temperate as that of Europe. But it is not so well suited to Europeans as one might think from the moderated power of the sun, because the air is rather rarefied. A good deal of the north-coast region of Venezuela is also a high plateau, with a delightful climate. Not being so elevated as inner Colombia, it is far more suited to European occupation. Much of Mexico is superbly healthy, and quite fit to be a White man's country. The same is partly the case with Guatemala and San Salvador; but Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panamá are not lands that are suited in the main to the occupation of the White man. Yet the West India Islands (even as far south as Trinidad, which is within the equatorial belt) are healthy, as Nature made them. They have only been made unhealthy through the introduction of the Negro.

The Negro has brought with him in his blood the germs of several diseases which, when communicated to the White man or the Amerindian by the agency of blood-sucking flies, mosquitoes, or ticks, have had a deadly effect. Of such diseases were yellow fever and various types of malarial fever. The early pioneers do not seem to have suffered much from these maladies, though they fell ill with dysentery and other complaints. It was only after Negro slaves became well established in tropical America that the period of epidemics and the wholesale death of Europeans began. Although the power of the sun is very fierce over all Tropical America, yet, owing to the breaking up of this region into sea and land and broad lake-like river valleys, the heat is more frequently relieved by cooling breezes than is the case in the heart of Africa or in India. In short, except for an occasional hurricane, the climate of Tropical America is in the main an agreeable

## The Spanish Discovery of America 25

one, and Europeans do not suffer, have not suffered, so much from the effects of the climate as from the introduction into their blood of germ diseases, partly through the agency of insects and partly through the water they drank or the food they ate.

As there were almost no deserts, no rainless regions, within the area covered by the adventures of these pioneers (except along the coast of Chili and Peru), there was a splendid and abundant vegetation. Indeed, at the present day, to those who desire to see quickly and with little fatigue or personal risk the marvellous growths of the tropical world, a voyage to the West India Islands, to Trinidad above all, may be strongly recommended. Owing to the abundant rainfall, very little of the earth's surface here is without its covering of vegetation. Even the abrupt precipices of rock have growing in every hole and cranny tufts of exquisite ferns, of flowering fuchsias, balsams, orchids, cacti, and various members of the pineapple family.<sup>1</sup> The branches and trunks of all the big trees contain vast families of poor relations—more pineapple-like plants, cacti, ferns, agaves, mistletoe, orchids, and lycopodiums. There is a great variety of palms. In Cuba (and introduced everywhere else) is to be seen the most beautiful member of this handsome family, the Royal palm (*Oreodoxa regia*), the smooth white trunk of which is like a slender, upright column of pale-grey stone. In the Greater and Lesser Antilles there are handsome, glaucous-green Fan palms of the genera *Sabal*, *Thrinax*, and *Coccothrinax*; in Jamaica and the Windward Islands are the *Acrocomia* palms with heavy frondage and some with spiny stems,

<sup>1</sup> These vary extraordinarily in appearance, from the *Hohenbergias*, with their immense, glaucous-green, leathery, frond-like leaves to the thread-like *Tillandsias*, which, in some examples—the celebrated Spanish Moss—are easily mistaken for a lichen. See p. 164.

besides one of the many "cabbage" palms (*Oreodoxa oleracea*, which in this case is a humbler and less beautiful relation of the splendid Royal palm), and slender, graceful *Geonoma* palms like coconuts in appearance. On the mainland of Central and northern South America the display of palms is one of the most notable features in the scenery and in the economic resources of the country. Putting on one side the ordinary coconut, which is possibly not a native of the American coasts but an introduction by Europeans from the Pacific islands, there is the gorgeous member of the *Cocos* genus, the "Coyol" of Central America and Colombia (*Cocos butyracea*), the "palma dulce" of much of Spanish-speaking Tropical America. The Coyol has enormous plume-like fronds 15 to 20 feet in length, and golden flower spikes 3 feet high. Its sap is intensely sweet and makes a delicious but intoxicating wine. Another magnificent and useful member of the *Cocos* genus is the "Corojo" of Cuba. Far-famed under divers names are the *Mauritia* or Moriche palms (*Mauritia flexuosa* is the most noteworthy) of South America, from which are obtained juicy, edible fruit (often made into beer), sweet sap that becomes a light wine, a sago-like pith from the stem (pounded, soaked, and baked into bread), fronds yielding useful fibre when macerated, and well suited for thatching, and, lastly, a hard core to the trunk, which splits into planks of useful timber. Other "wine" palms remarkable for their sweet and wholesome sap are species of the genus *Euterpe*—often called "assai" palms by Spanish writers. The *Elais melanococca*, a relation of the Oil palm of Africa, found in Equatorial America from Costa Rica to the Amazon, yields a useful oil for cooking from the rind of its nuts. This is known by the Spanish Americans as the "Manteca" or butter palm. The Peach palm

## The Spanish Discovery of America 27

("pirijao")—*Gulielma speciosa*—has delicious peach-like fruit. The "Corneto" palm (*Deckeria*) with a tall slender trunk, rises from the apex of a curious cone-shaped cluster of aerial roots, and bears on its flower stalks immense clusters of edible nuts, which in the mass may weigh as much as 100 to 200 lb. The numerous kinds of *Areca* palms supply in their compact clumps of undeveloped fronds the "cabbage"<sup>1</sup> which was the delight of many a famished mariner in the pioneering days. *Euterpe edulis* is also another "cabbage" palm. The exceedingly beautiful *Ceroxylon andicola* of Colombia, Ecuador, and western Venezuela—the "Wax palm"—yielded from the inner side of its fronds a bluish-white wax which was most useful to the Spaniards for making wax candles. A similar service in the more eastern parts of northern South America was rendered by the *Copernicia cerifera*. The *Carludovica palmata* of Colombia and Panamá is a climbing palm from the bast of whose fronds are made the celebrated Panamá hats. The long-leaved fronds of the *Attalea* palms also supply bast and fibre for many purposes, and the *Leopoldinia* "piassava" palms produce from their fronds bristles for brooms and brushes. The Tagua palm (*Phytelephas*) has a short, thick stem, and its sheaf of fronds appears to grow straight out of the ground. Its fruit is as large as a melon, and contains inside a number

<sup>1</sup> The *Areca oleracea* palm was described by Captain Henderson of British Honduras as the queen of the woods. In height it frequently rose to upwards of a hundred feet, entirely erect, and tapering with exquisite proportion to its summit. The trunk was without branches or leaves to within a few feet of the top; and the cabbage, or substance from which it has derived its familiar appellation, was also found near the top, enclosed within a thin, green, spongy bark. In trees that have acquired full growth, the cabbage is large, in form not unlike the thick part of the tusk of an elephant, perfectly white, and in long, thin, convolute flakes. When boiled it is exceedingly pleasant to the taste, resembling that of the artichoke, and it likewise forms a very agreeable pickle, in which way it is often used. "Cabbages" could also be obtained from the young coconut palm.



of seeds like lumps of ivory. These furnish the "vegetable ivory" of commerce, and their hard substance takes the place of elephant's ivory in the manufacture of many small articles. Tropical America is emphatically "Palmland", much more so than Africa or south-west Asia.

Amongst the more striking trees of the forest are two gigantic genera of the Mallow family, the *Eriodendron* and *Bombax*, common also to western Tropical Africa. These are the "silk-cotton" trees or Ceibas.<sup>1</sup> The *Eriodendron* more especially produces in its seed capsules a beautiful, silky, glossy fibre, which, though not so easily woven as the cotton wool of its distant relation, *Gossypium*, is nevertheless deftly employed by both Amerindians and Negroes in their manufactures and adornments. The *Ceiba* (*Bombax*) is looked up to reverentially as a god by many tribes, from its huge, glossy, white stem, and immense branching white arms, crowned with rich, digitate foliage, and in the springtime of the year with a magnificent display of crimson blossoms. The flowers of the *Eriodendrons* are either rose colour or white. Two trees in these great tropical forests—the *Masaranduba* (*Mimusops elata*) in the south-east, and the "Palo de Vaca" (*Brosimum galactodendron*) in the north-west, are known as "cow-trees" or "milk-trees"; from the fact that they yield an abundant milky sap, which tastes exactly like milk and is quite wholesome. Many other trees and shrubs produce nuts that are nourishing and good to eat, the most noteworthy being the "Sapuçaia" (*Lecythis*) of Guiana and Brazil,

<sup>1</sup> The silk-cotton tree, of the genus *Bombax*, rises to a height of over 100 feet, and when in bloom is one of the most splendid productions of nature, being entirely crowned with a profusion of brilliant flowers, usually of a deep carnation red. These are succeeded by a multitude of small pods containing the silky cotton, and these pods burst when sufficiently ripe. It is generally asserted that a full crop of cotton only occurs once in three years. The trunk of the tree was much used at one time in the building of canoes.

## The Spanish Discovery of America 29

and the still more celebrated Brazil-nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*) of northern and north-eastern South America. This last is a very lofty tree, the huge, heavy fruit of which is like a big cannon ball in shape and nearly as heavy. When the outer shell is broken it is found to contain, clustered together, the nuts so familiar to all of us, with their rich oily pulp. Many of these Tropical American trees are remarkable for furnishing vivid dyes from their bark or wood. There is the *Bixia orellana* or Anatto tree, the rich orange-yellow or crimson dye of which is used for colouring the outside of Dutch cheeses,<sup>1</sup> the celebrated Logwood tree, which, like pepper and spice, lobsters and sea-lions, sugar and indiarubber, "got into politics" and changed the fate of several American states. Logwood, a member of the Bean family, is known scientifically as *Hæmatoxylon campechianum*, and is really a native of the Central American forests, having been at one time especially abundant in Yucatan and Honduras. It was soon introduced by Europeans into Jamaica and other West India Islands, where it is a marked and very beautiful feature in the landscape, especially in the winter-spring of the year. Then it is absolutely covered with pale golden-yellow, bean-like blossoms, exhaling a delicious scent of honey. The sight of a grove of logwood trees in full blossom is sufficient reward for crossing the Atlantic. One of the great inducements to Europeans in the conquest and settlement of Tropical America was the Brazil-wood, trees of the genus *Cæsalpinia* (usually *C. echinata*). The inner wood of this tree is of a brilliant scarlet-crimson colour. Fragments of it were actually drifted across the Atlantic to the Azores Islands and the coast of Portugal,

<sup>1</sup>Owing to the Dutch having so early discovered and colonized Guiana, where this tree is abundant.

where it was called "Brazil", from a Romance word allied in origin to the English "blaze"—meaning that the wood was as red as fire. Subsequently, this valuable dyewood, which for long was the principal scarlet-crimson dye used in Europe, was discovered in south-eastern Asia, where species of *Cæsalpinia* grow, as well as in Tropical America. But when the Portuguese at the very beginning of the sixteenth century were driven by the winds over to the coast of Brazil in trying to reach South Africa, and there obtained from the natives pieces of these red dyewoods, they believed that they were in touch with eastern Asia, and at once gave to the great country they had accidentally discovered, the name of Brazil. A somewhat inferior orange or scarlet dye, often called "brazileto", is obtained from a smaller tree allied to the *Cæsalpinia*, usually classified as *Peltophorum*. The trees of the *Garcinia* genus supply from their sap a vivid-yellow dye.

As regards timber trees, there were various kinds of ebony and very hard woods, called in earlier days *lignum vitæ*, or "wood of life", from the idea that they never rotted. The *lignum vitæ*, which is such a feature in the landscapes of the larger West India Islands, is *Guaiacum officinale*, yielding a drug valuable in medicine. The *lignum vitæ* of Central America is a species of *Zygo-phylum*. The celebrated "rosewood", so much used in cabinetmaking, comes from Tropical America, and is of the genus *Dalbergia*. The Tecoma of Nicaragua (*T. sideroxylon*) is an immensely hard wood, and at the same time an object of great beauty in the Nicaraguan landscapes in early springtime. The Tecoma is then without leaves, but is covered with a glorious mantle of golden flowers. Much of the surface of the hills of Spanish and British Honduras, and of the higher parts of Yucatan

## The Spanish Discovery of America 31

and southern Mexico, are clothed with forests of pines and junipers. On the lofty mountains of Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela, and the Greater Antilles appears an outpost of the southern or Antarctic types of conifers, in the form of the yew-like *Podocarpus*. The *Araucaria*, or "monkey-puzzle" tree, so familiar to us now in the ornamental plantations of England, is found on the mountains of Brazil and Chile. But the noblest of Tropical American timber trees was the Mahogany (*Swietenia mahogani*), a native of Central America, the Greater Antilles, and perhaps of northern South America. It would be singled out anywhere, even by an observer who was no botanist, as being an aristocrat amongst trees, with its neat, glossy foliage (somewhat like that of the ash), and its perfect symmetry of outline. Superb evergreen oaks and ilexes are found throughout the dense forests of Central America, the West Indies, and northern South America. The Myrtle order is represented by many tall trees (amongst which are the Brazil-nut already referred to, and several *Eugenias*). There are also giant laurels, and the tall *Myrospermum*, which yields a valuable healing gum known as Peruvian balsam. Gigantic bamboos are found in most parts of Tropical America, and are extremely beautiful in the scenery of Jamaica and Cuba.

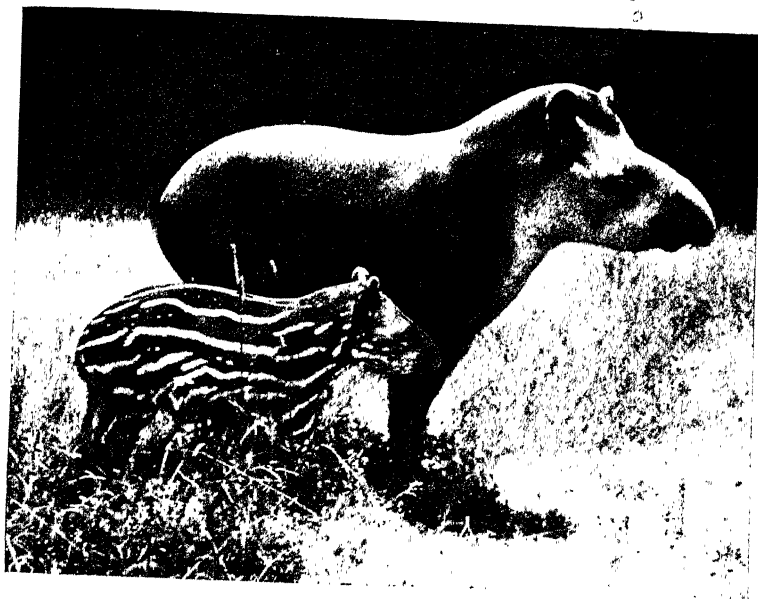
As regards fruit-and-food trees, Tropical America is singularly well provided. Besides the various palms which yield edible fruit, there are the Guava (*Psidium*), the Custard Apple, the Sweet and Sour "Sops" (*Anona*), the Rose Apple (*Eugenia jambos*), the Alligator Pear (*Persea*), the Cashew (*Anacardium*), the Star Apple (*Chrysophyllum*), the Sapodilla and Caniste (*Sapota*) (see p. 255), the Pineapple, the Coco-plum (*Chrysobalanus*), the Sea-grapes (*Coccolobis*), the Papaw (*Carica*), the Jagua

(*Genipa*), the Yellow Mammee Apple (*Mammea*), the Red Mammee (*Lucuma*); several kinds of Cactus yielding juicy, edible fruit; the Pimento spice tree of Jamaica (*Eugenia pimenta*), and the far-famed Cacao tree (*Theobroma*) which grows wild in the southern parts of Central America and in northern South America. In Guatemala there is a "chocolate tree" (*Herrania purpurea*), the seeds of which in their outer covering contain a chocolate of a finer flavour than that of the cacao.

As regards flower displays, these lands of the West Indies and the Spanish Main are truly remarkable. The tall trees on their branches and trunks provide a home for orchids of bewildering variety and beauty, most noteworthy amongst which, in Central America, Colombia, and Guiana, are the genera *Cattleya*, *Odontoglossum*, *Oncidium*, *Miltonia*, and *Masdevallia*. There are wild bananas of exquisite emerald-green foliage with a bluish bloom on it, and flowering spikes of crimson and yellow. The Flamboyant trees (*Poinciana pulcherrima*) of the West Indies are gorgeous when in full flower, with their large scarlet-and-yellow blossoms. Of imperial magnificence is the Royal Piñon of Cuba (*Erythrina velutina*), with large bean-like flowers in clusters, deep purple red in colour. Exquisitely beautiful is the tender pinkish mauve of the *Gliricidium* blossom in the early spring of Jamaica, the branches of these trees being without leaves and covered with long clusters of peach-coloured, laburnum-like flowers. On the still waters of Guiana are the most gigantic "water lilies" of the world, the *Victoria regia*, with immense rose-coloured flowers and leaves like Oriental brass trays with a rim round the edge, big enough and strong enough sometimes to support a small child. There are climbing *Solanums*—near relations of the Deadly Nightshade—in



JAGUAR



AMERICAN TAPIR AND YOUNG



## The Spanish Discovery of America 33

Central America with lovely clusters of large sky-blue, white or pink flowers. There are, in South America and the West India Islands, *Bignonia* creepers with gorgeous orange blossoms, the *Petræa* with clusters of azure blue, and the celebrated *Allamanda* climber, with its trumpet-like flowers of brilliant yellow. On the ground are Thunbergias, with large waxy flowers of white or smalt blue. Nor in any survey of this kind must be forgotten the many lovely convolvuluses, the most beautiful of all being the Morning Glory (as it is called in the West Indies), a large, vivid, ultramarine-blue flower, sometimes so thickly clustered that the leaves are almost hidden. Innumerable are the plants, the climbers, the shrubs, with blossoms of waxy white, heavily scented, or of deep brown, burning orange, pale azure blue, dark purple, sulphur yellow: every tint known to horticulture, except, it may be, the rarest of all colours in flowers, greenish blue and jet black. Early spring in the West Indies or in Central America probably gives displays of colour in flowers to be matched nowhere else in the world. On the other hand, in the dense forests of Colombia, the Orinoko basin, and Guiana, the traveller is frequently disappointed at the monotony of the dark-green foliage and the invisibility of the flowers, the most superb amongst the orchids being placed so high above him that they are out of sight and cannot in any case affect the tints of the landscapes. Guatemala has plains and open scrub lands where thistles grow to the height of small trees; the more sterile regions of Central America, the plateaus of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and portions of Haiti are the homes of weird, leafless cacti, resembling, according to their species, boulders of stone, pincushions and tufts of spines, tall, green, spiny columns, turbaned heads, crawling snakes, branches of coral,



wreaths of mistletoe, and gnarled, twisted, and segmented prickly pears. Yet each in its springtime bursts into flowers gorgeous beyond description and often large out of all proportion to the mother plant—snowy white, pale cream, tender pink, glowing orange, apricot colour, and deep purple red.

But a good deal of northern South America, and parts of Central America, are uninteresting to the eye and even desolate: plains of coarse grass, dotted at rare intervals with clumps of low-growing fan palms, thorny mimosas or acacias, or gnarled evergreen oaks. These regions are called “chaparro” by the Spaniards in Central America, “llanos” or plains in Venezuela, “sertões” in northern Brazil. The tablelands or “mesas” of Venezuela are singularly desolate and lacking in varied vegetation. Desolate, wind-blown, misty, and chilly are the “paramos” or lofty tablelands of Colombia, but here, though the raging wind makes it difficult for trees to survive, there is a good deal of ground vegetation; amongst other things quantities of the wild potato, with its tiny, bitter tubers, scarcely recognizable as the parent form of our now indispensable article of food.

In this rapid sketch of the botanical aspect of Tropical America I have left out all allusion to introduced trees and plants, such as the orange, lemon, and lime, the shaddock, grape fruit, mango, banana or plantain, bread fruit, coffee tree, and sugar cane, because these were not seen by the Spaniards on their first arrival, nor are they native to the land, having been introduced by the Spaniards, Portuguese, Dutch, and English from Africa, Asia, and the Pacific islands. They are now very prominent in the landscapes of Tropical America.

As regards the animal kingdom, the most noteworthy

## The Spanish Discovery of America 35

feature in Tropical America, to the eye of those who only look on the surface of things, is the wealth of birds, and of amazingly beautiful birds. Humming Birds all the year round frequent the flowers which bloom in every season, their bodies often in colour like parcels of jewels (though there are some among them—and all the females—that are quite dingy in aspect, yet otherwise especially remarkable for length and shape of beak). Other exquisite birdlets are the Banana or Orange “Quits” of ultramarine blue with orange throats. There are Toucans with plumage of black, white, crimson, and pale sulphur yellow, or of various tints of bright green, crimson, and ashy blue, but concentrating the main wonder and loveliness of their development on their immense painted beaks. There are purple, green, and crimson Jacamars and Motmots; and nearly related to these and to the Kingfishers are the exquisite little Todies of the Greater Antilles, in their plumage of emerald green, white, and crimson. In the caverns of northern South America are the strange Oil Birds, with a mottled plumage of chocolate brown, grey, fawn, and white, whose bodies are so soaked in the oil which they derive from fatty nuts, that they burn like candles. Then in Central America are the most gorgeous Trogons of the world, emerald and blue green, crimson and black, with tails four times the length of the thrush-like body. In northern South America are the Cocks-of-the-rock, crimson, scarlet, or orange, with a relief on the back of cool whitish-grey and black pinions. These are nearly allied to the glossy black Umbrella Birds of Guiana and Brazil. On the mainland of Tropical America is found the biggest of all birds of prey, the immense Harpy Eagle. There are, of course, no real vultures like those of the Old World, but there is a very good imitation

in the immense Condor of the Andes, and the bold and rather picturesque black Turkey Buzzards found in some, but not all, of the West India Islands and throughout Central and South America; and in Central America exists the most handsomely coloured of all the birds of prey, the King Vulture (*Gyparchus papa*), with its cream-coloured and black plumage, and vivid yellow, red, and blue bare skin of neck and head. There are no real pheasants in this region, except the Honduras Turkey; but the gallinaceous birds are well represented by the group of Curassows, which does not, however, extend to the West Indian Islands, unless it be to one or two of the Windward Islands near South America. The Curassows and Guans are large birds the size of turkeys, pheasants, or big partridges, which live mostly in the forest and make their nests in the trees and not on the ground. Many of them have big, gaily coloured beaks, wattles, horns; or curious curly crests. The splendid Honduras Turkey in its range extends as far south as the country of that name, but is chiefly found in Yucatan, Guatemala, and British Honduras. It is rapidly becoming extinct under the attacks of native and European sportsmen. The adult male is one of the most gorgeous of existing birds, more splendid in his metallic tints of emerald, copper, cobalt, ruby, bronze, and silver than even the peacock. Along the great rivers of the South American mainland may still be seen the big Jabiru Stork, with its glossy plumage of cream-white satin and bare, black head and neck. There are also large goose-like birds, the Screamers; and there are scarlet Ibises, pink Spoonbills, and flocks of Flamingoes of a bright rose red along the banks of the South and Central American rivers, on the swamps and lagoons, which literally colour some of the landscapes. In the more northern

## The Spanish Discovery of America 37

and eastern West India Islands, especially in the Bahamas, the coral lagoons and pools are literally rosy red with the flamingoes. We shall get many a glimpse of bird life in the stories of the Pioneers, so that I shall not longer detain the reader's attention over the subject in this preliminary chapter.

The indigenous mammals of Tropical America, though they once included some of the most striking types that have ever been developed, are poor at the present day in number and species, and as regards size or remarkable appearance. There is no longer any Sabre-toothed Tiger—this monster, with fangs 8 or 9 inches long, vanished soon after the coming of man. But the Jaguar, a larger and handsomer leopard, is still abundant in Central and South America. Like most other of the existing beasts, it never penetrated to the West Indies. The Puma is scarce in the northern parts of Tropical America, only becoming abundant in the southern half of South America or in northern Mexico. There are numerous and handsome wild cats, however, such as the Ocelot, which is almost big enough to be called a leopard. Some of these wild cats, like the puma, have no stripes or spots in the adult, but are a plain brown all over. There are several species of wild jackal-like dog; and a very remarkable form is found in northern South America—the Bush Dog of Guiana (*Icticyon*), which in appearance is more like a large weasel. There is no Bear, except high up in the Andes Mountains. There are some large weasels, skunks, and raccoons, and coati-mundis with long flexible noses like the “slithy toves” in *Alice Through the Looking-glass*, and there is the pretty, playful Kinkajou, a raccoon with a long flexible tail, which lives in the dense forests. These forests also harbour Armadilloes, and large and small

Anteaters [such as are now familiar to us in zoological gardens], and two or three species of Sloth. We know now that throughout much of South, Central, and southern North America there existed huge Ground-sloths as big as elephants, which, however, have long been extinct. So also have been the gigantic scaly armadilloes which, like the Ground-sloth, even found their way into the West India Islands and into North America.

The monkeys of Central and South America in outward appearance are very much like those of Africa, except the marmosets, which have claws chiefly, instead of nails. Some of the marmosets are lumps of silky loveliness, balls of golden, iridescent fluff. The Spider Monkeys (*Ateles*), the Sapajus (*Cebus*), the Woolly Monkeys (*Lagothrix*), the Howling Monkeys (*Mycetes*) have tails with prehensile tips; but the short-tailed Wakaris (*Brachyurus*), the long-headed Squirrel Monkeys (*Chrysomithrix*), the furry-tailed *Callithrix*, the large-eyed *Duruculis*, and the bearded Sakis (*Pithecia*), do not possess prehensile tails. The Wakaris and the Sakis do not extend their range into Central America; and there are no monkeys native to the West India Islands. The ancestors of these Tropical American monkeys once came—perhaps two million years ago—from Africa, across vanished land bridges which cut the Atlantic Ocean into two great seas. Elephants have long been extinct in America. The largest land mammal still surviving is the Tapir, in two or three different species, found throughout Central America, and much of South America also. [The Tapir is a distant relation of the horse and the rhinoceros.] The ancient horses of South America likewise became extinct before any Europeans saw the land, and the wild horses found there now are descended from the domestic horses introduced by

## The Spanish Discovery of America 39

the Spaniards. In western and southern South America there are two species of camel-like creatures—the Llama or Guanaco<sup>1</sup> and the Vicunya. Throughout all this region also there are deer of an American type (with its subgenera, *Mazama*, *Cariacus*, and *Coassus*; also the genus *Pudua*), ranging in size from a fallow deer to a tiny goat; and two forms of a pig-like beast—the Collared Peccary and the large White-lipped Peccary; this last-named is a fierce, pugnacious animal. One of the most interesting mammalian types, however, is the Opossum, a marsupial, like the mammals of Australia, and represented by a number of genera and species. There is also in the mountains of Ecuador a very rare little creature, like a rat in appearance, which is more nearly related to the kangaroo or phalanger group of Australasia. There are no insectivores anywhere in Tropical America, with the exception, strange to say, of a comparatively large member of this ancient group—the Solenodon—which is found in Cuba and Hispaniola. Tropical America, however, is remarkable for its development of rodents. It has no squirrels; but it has tree Porcupines; Hutias (*Capromys*)—big tree-climbing rodents of the West India Islands; the great Capybara of the South American rivers (as large as a pig); Agoutis (superficially resembling big rabbits with long hind legs); and white-spotted Pacas; Cavies (from one of which was developed the little guinea-pig in northern Peru); and other types, like the Chinchilla and Vizcacha, extremely valuable for their beautiful fur. Only one species of Hare is found in Tropical America.

Amongst the reptiles of this region might be mentioned,

<sup>1</sup>The Guanaco is the wild form of the domesticated Llama and Alpaca. The Llama (pronounced "lyama") is a large beast, used for transport; the Alpaca is smaller, and is kept for its wool, which is woven into cloth.

as especially interesting to man, the vegetable-eating lizards of the Iguana type, sometimes attaining considerable size and importance, from an economic point of view, because their flesh is very good eating. There are perhaps two types of the Swollen-snouted American Crocodile to be found in Cuba. This form—*Crocodilus americanus*—exists also in Central America and northern South America as far east as Venezuela.<sup>1</sup> There is a species of Slender-snouted Crocodile in the Orinoko River.

The real Alligator of Florida and North America does not extend into the tropical regions. It is represented by an allied genus, the Caiman. In northern South America there are, as already mentioned, two kinds of Crocodile; but the creatures which are described as “crocodiles” on the great rivers, and as very dangerous to man from their ferocity and large size, are really Caimans. Though outwardly very like crocodiles, caimans and alligators are somewhat distinct on account of the arrangement of their teeth. The Chelonian or Tortoise order is represented by Mud-turtles, Terrapins, Gigantic Tortoises (Galapagos Islands only), and Side-necked and Snake-necked Tortoises. These two last families—the *Pelomedusidæ* and *Chelydidæ*—frequent the rivers, and are usually known as “river turtle”. They are celebrated for their eggs and sometimes their flesh, both of which are much eaten by the Amerindians.<sup>2</sup> There are no pythons, as in Australia, India, and Africa (except one doubtful species in Mexico), but

<sup>1</sup> The Swollen-snouted Crocodile (*C. americanus*) and its sub-species in Cuba (*C. a. acutus*) grows to about 12 feet in length. Its range extends to Jamaica, and perhaps Haiti, besides Central America, Colombia, and Venezuela. The Slender-snouted Crocodile (*C. intermedius* or *moreletii*) of the Orinoko River is a little larger. These crocodiles are not dangerous to man. See p. 158 and also pp. 156 and 236.

<sup>2</sup> The most famous of these water tortoises of the Side-necked group is the Giant Amazon Tortoise or “turtle” (*Podocnemis*), about 2 feet 6 inches long, which assembles at certain seasons in enormous numbers on the sandbanks of the Orinoko and Amazon to lay its eggs. See p. 160.

## The Spanish Discovery of America 41

there are Boa-constrictors and the very much larger Anaconda, or water-loving boa. Yet these great snakes of Tropical America are not so dangerous to man as are the poisonous snakes of the Cobra and Rattlesnake families, which abound in most parts of Tropical America, with exception of nearly all the West India Islands. There are no poisonous snakes in the Greater Antilles or northern Leeward Islands. They are only found (one genus of Cobras—*Corallus*—and one of Rattlesnakes—*Lachesis*) in the larger of the Lesser Antilles: Guadalupe to Grenada. The freshwater fish of this region (Central and South America) are more nearly connected with those of Europe and Africa than with the fish of North America. Indeed, Central and South America and the West India Islands in the far past had very little to do with North America. They were certainly united by land at several different periods of the earth's history with West Africa and Europe, and probably also, through Antarctica, with Australia.

The Falkland Islands, for long a British possession, are, of course, from their very position, not only far outside Tropical America but somewhat distinct from it in fauna and flora, though of course closely related to the adjoining South American mainland, 250 miles to the westward. This archipelago consists of over a hundred islets and rocks and two large islands, East and West Falkland, which together cover an area of about 6000 square miles. East and West Falkland are hilly, in places rising to altitudes of as much as 2000 feet and a little over. They are terribly windswept, though the climate is seldom very cold. But the terrific force of the wind makes it almost impossible for trees to grow there, and although the vegetation is fairly abundant, it is all low-growing and consists in the main of grasses.



This group was at no great distance of time connected with the mainland, otherwise it could not have been inhabited, as it was when first discovered, by two indigenous land mammals, of which the most noteworthy was a wolf-like dog (the so-called "Antarctic Wolf") resembling the Coyote of western North America. The other was a peculiar rat of the genus *Rhithrodon*. The wolf was destroyed by the Scottish sheep farmers who settled on the two largest of the Falkland Islands and has been extinct since 1875.<sup>1</sup> But this group of desolate islands was the home of innumerable seals, sea-lions, and sea-elephants, so that to its early settlers and explorers it did not seem very scarcely provided with mammalian life. As regards birds, it possessed, besides Penguins, Petrels, Plovers, and other gulls, shorebirds, and the marine "Steamer" ducks (*Tachyeres*), the following landbirds: Seed-snip ( *Attagis* )—like a cross between a partridge and a plover—a Widgeon, Kelp Geese, and Upland Geese (*Chloëphaga*), Coscoroba and Black-necked Swans, the Crested Duck, a Teal and Pintail, a Red-spotted Buzzard, a Short-eared Owl, a Marsh Wren, a Pipit, a pretty Bunting (*Phrygilus*), a handsome red-throated Starling (*Trupialis*), a Wheatear (*Muscisaxicola*), a Spine-tail, and a Warbler.

The indigenous human races of Tropical America, when it was first discovered by Europeans, belonged exclusively to what might be called the Amerindian type, related, of course, in origin to the Amerindians of North America, though varying from them a little in appearance. Like the North American Indians, they were a people with a copper-coloured skin, ranging in tone from pale yellow to

<sup>1</sup> Both wolf and rat are still found living in the great island of Tierra del Fuego, at the southern extremity of South America.

## The Spanish Discovery of America 43

red brown. The hair of the head was black, long, and, as a rule, perfectly straight, though occasionally it curled upwards at the tip, and was not always black, but sometimes a black tinged with reddish brown. Though they agreed in possessing all these characteristics, they varied a little in head form (some having round and others long heads) and in bodily stature. For the most part the Amerindians of Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, the Guianas, Ecuador, Central America, the Antilles, and northern Mexico were short of stature; those of Argentina, Patagonia, and Chile; of Venezuela and Colombia, of Yucatan and southern Mexico were tall, or at any rate of the average height of Europeans. The Patagonians, Pampas Indians, and Araucanians were occasionally tall enough—the men being over 6 feet in height—to be classed by the Spaniards as “giants”. The North American Indians of Texas, New Mexico, and Florida were also a tall race. Some tribes, like the Arawaks, and above all the Peruvians, tended to have rather short legs in proportion to their body, and long arms. Others, again, like the Caribs and people of Brazil, were mostly long-headed, beautifully well-proportioned and very like Europeans in their figures. The ugliest were certainly the Peruvian lower classes, with very broad cheekbones, narrow chins, deep-set eyes, and flattened noses. Many of the Colombian tribes (Chibchas especially), when first discovered by the Spaniards, had aquiline, almost Jewish, noses. The tribes of Central America and western South America were mostly round-headed, in contrast with the long-headed Brazilians and Terra del Fuegians.

The stages of culture in which these Amerindian aborigines were found at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries were also diverse.

As a rule the peoples of Brazil and the Amazon valley were living in complete savagery; those of easternmost Brazil being almost in the lowest stage of really human existence. The Patagonians, and still more the Araucanians of southern Chile, were in a superior condition; though the Fuegians—at the southernmost extremity of South America—were as degraded and primitive in their mode of life as the equally naked and barbarous Boto-cudos of Brazil. On the other hand, a considerable degree of civilization had arisen in Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia; in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Yucatan, and, above all, southern Mexico. The Arawaks and Caribs of the Antilles also were no longer in the lowest savage stage of human culture, any more than the Amerindians of Florida, Texas, or northern Mexico.

Scarcely any of these peoples were acquainted with the use of metals (except gold and occasionally copper, which they employed for making ornaments) before Europeans came amongst them. The exceptions were the Yunka or Chima of northern Peru, and perhaps some other Andine tribes which had acquired the use of bronze and copper axes. Those of Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, and Peru built remarkable temples, houses, and terraces of masonry, had some system of hieroglyphic writing, and wore elaborate clothes of woven cloth. The Peruvians had domesticated the guanaco or llama and used it as a beast of burden in its larger form, and as a provider of wool for weaving in the alpaca breed. They had also taken in hand a small blackish-brown cavy, known to us as Cutler's Cavy, and from it had developed the pretty little guinea pig, which they kept as we keep rabbits. Central and South America possessed domestic dogs, and some of the Central American people seem to have domesticated

the turkey, and even tried their hand at the curassows, while in South America they had domesticated the Musk duck and had partially tamed certain wading birds like the trumpeters or the screamers. The dog was kept and bred quite as much for its flesh, which was constantly eaten, as for any purpose of hunting. In Mexico there was an old breed of naked, hairless dog. On the whole, it seems most probable that the breeds of Amerindian dog came from the far north originally, and were not the result of taming any of the real wild dogs of Tropical America.

All these tribes carried on a certain amount of agriculture and had already developed the useful maize out of some wild species of grass found growing on the mountains of Mexico. Some of them also cultivated the potato for its tubers. The Manioc—a species of *Euphorbia*—was perhaps the most widely distributed food plant. They probably had the sweet potato, though if this was the case, it must have reached them from the Polynesian Islands before the White man came. The cultivated banana may only have been introduced by the Spaniards or Portuguese, as also some other food plants now common throughout Tropical America. Yet all this region at the time it was first discovered by Europeans was probably far better endowed with a food supply for man, in its wild animals and plants, than any other region of the earth's surface. The sea coasts, of course, swarmed with edible fish of all kinds,<sup>1</sup> with the delicious green turtle, and with oysters, clams, mussels, whelks, and other shellfish. The rivers were frequented by great numbers of water tortoises and terrapins, which were not only good to eat, but which laid numbers of excellent-tasting eggs.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of "Panamá" is said to have been "(a coast with) plenty of fish".

The land crabs, especially on some of the West India Islands, were—are still—most excellent eating. There were crayfish in most of the freshwater streams, prawns in the salt water and the estuaries. Iguana lizards were common and easily killed, and their flesh was a favourite article of food. Trees like the Brazil-nut produced pleasant-tasting nuts; palms yielded juicy fruit or oily rinds and kernels, and a sap like wine; the pineapple grew wild everywhere, except in the West India Islands (into which it was afterwards introduced). There were guavas, persimmons, papaws, alligator pears, sapodillas, mammee apples, and the other fruits mentioned in various parts of this book. Some of these wild fruits have since been successfully cultivated. In the forests of the American mainland there were great troops of peccaries (a kind of pig); wild deer or tapir were snared or fell into pitfalls; the agouti rodent, the caviés or “guinea pigs” (domesticated in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, and western Venezuela), the porcupines, hares, vizcachas, gave excellent meat when baked in the ground with red-hot ashes: while the birds—though the Amerindians out of admiration for their lovely plumage refrained from killing many of them—were an ever-present source of appetizing food. Yet either from a love of variety, or for reasons of superstition or ferocity, a good deal of cannibalism prevailed amongst the tribes of the eastern West Indies and of South America when Europeans first arrived amongst them; and the eating of human flesh was not unknown in the customs of Mexico and Peru.

There was one direction in which the Indians of Central and South America differed from the Amerindians of North America, and that was in their treatment of women. “I never knew an Indian”, wrote Lionel Wafer

## The Spanish Discovery of America 47

at the close of the seventeenth century,<sup>1</sup> "beat his wife nor give her any hard words; not even in the quarrels which they are wont to have in their cups will they show any roughness towards the women who attend them. The women observe towards their husbands a profound respect and duty upon all occasions, while the husbands are very kind and loving to their wives. The women cheerfully undertake much drudgery about the house and plantations, and often act as porters in journeys and expeditions, carrying all the heaviest luggage."

The children during the first month after their birth were tied or swathed on to a flat piece of board, a practice which was intended to make them grow up straight-limbed. Every now and then the child was loosed from the board, washed with cold water, and then wrapped on again. The parents seemed invariably fond of their children, never using any severity towards them. The boys as they grew up were bred to their fathers' exercises, especially shooting with the bow and arrow and throwing the lance, in both of which they soon became very expert. After the age of ten or eleven years they accompanied their fathers on hunting expeditions, during which they would shoot small birds. The girls meantime were bred up by their mothers in domestic employments, taught to cook, to macerate bark, and other vegetable substances in order to obtain fibre, to beat out silk grass for thread, cord, and other things, to pick cotton and spin it for their mothers to weave, to twist cotton and yarn for fringes, and prepare canes, reeds, or fan-palm leaves for basket making; though the baskets themselves were actually made by the men, who first dyed the materials in bright

<sup>1</sup> He is describing his experiences of the Darien tribes in north-western Colombia. See Chapter IX.

colours with vegetable dyes and then wove them very prettily.

When a father was about to marry his daughter he invited all the natives within twenty miles to a great feast. The men who came to the wedding carried their axes along with them for working purposes; the women each brought about half a bushel of maize; the boys, fruit and roots; the girls, fowls and eggs; none coming empty-handed. The presents were set down before the door of the bride's house. Then after an interval all the guests assembled for the wedding and the bridegroom presented each man with a calabash of fermented drink, and conducted each one through the house into some open space behind it. The married women came next, who likewise received each a calabash of liquor. Lastly came the boys and young girls, who all drank at the door of the house and then followed the adults into the open space behind. After this arrived the bride and bridegroom accompanied by their fathers, the father of the bridegroom leading his son, and the father of the bride his daughter. The former made a speech to the assembled company and danced about with many wild gestures, till at last his body was covered with sweat. The bride's father also danced about for a similar length of time and only stopped when he was in a condition of excessive perspiration; then he knelt down and held his daughter. The bridegroom's father similarly knelt, after handing his son over to the keeping of the young woman. Bride and bridegroom took each other by the hand as a symbol of affiance, after which the bride was returned to her father, and indeed was kept by him in seclusion for another seven days before she was finally transferred to her husband.

After the affiance ceremony all the men would take up

their axes and run shouting and bellowing to a piece of forest land, destined to be the plantation and residence of the newly married. Here they fell to work cutting down the trees and clearing the ground as fast as possible, working with the greatest imaginable vigour for seven days. As fast as they cleared the ground the women and children planted it with maize and other vegetables. All parties joined in building a house for the newly married couple to live in. As soon as these latter had settled there together they gave a great feast to their friends and helpers, which was accompanied by copious potations of beer made from maize. Before the drinking began the bridegroom took away all the arms from the men and hung them to the ridge pole of the house where none could get at them but himself; for when the corn beer went to their heads they were liable to become very quarrelsome. The men continued drinking night and day till all the liquor was used up, and when not drinking they usually lay slumbering and snoring. At the end of about four days they had generally recovered their senses, whereupon they all returned to their own homes. The women at all such feasts, as well as in their homes, waited on their husbands and supplied them with drink; they never ate or drank with them, but by themselves, when their husbands' appetites were satisfied.

The men when at home troubled themselves little with any business, yet were not completely idle, for they would be making cups and baskets, arrows and arrowheads, lances, nets, floats out of small hollow bamboos or reeds, and drums. At their dances they would keep up a perpetual humming as an accompaniment, and generally danced thirty or forty together in a ring, the men only; or if the women danced, it was entirely by themselves.



Their dancing was very like that of the Asiatic countries and of some negro tribes, a perpetual wriggling and undulating of the body. Sometimes these monotonous exercises were varied by solitary dancing of a wild character. A man would leave the ring, jump in the air, throw and catch his lance, bend right backwards so that his body was almost arched like a hoop, spring forward again, leap in the air, and carry out other violent motions, until at last his body was in a violent sweat, whereupon he would leap into the nearest river, wash himself clean, come out, and sweep the water off his body and hair with his hands. When the men were very drunk their women would put them in a hammock, where they lay snoring, whilst the women perpetually sprinkled cold water over the body, washing hands, feet, and face, until at last the drunken fit was over.

Hunting expeditions lasted from three to eighteen days, according as there was good or ill fortune in regard to the meeting of game. Women accompanied the huntsmen to carry their baskets of provisions—yams, bananas, potatoes, and cassava roots already roasted, besides parched maize and ripe bananas from which to make beer. The women also carried calabashes and a few earthenware pipkins. The men were armed with bows and arrows, small axes, and a long knife.<sup>1</sup> The game for which they sought especially were the wild pigs (peccaries), deer, tapirs, and monkeys, also guans and curassows. At night-time they would choose a camping place on some elevated spot near a brook or river. Here they would hang up a hammock between two trees and cover them-

<sup>1</sup> Except in Colombia and Peru all the "business ends" of these weapons were of stone, bone, bamboo splinter, &c., until the Spaniards introduced iron amongst the natives.

## The Spanish Discovery of America 51

selves with the large fronds of the wild or cultivated banana as a shelter from rain. Their chief game were the two sorts of peccary, both of which went in herds of from two to three hundred, though there might sometimes be as many as a thousand of these little pigs. The men were accompanied by their dogs, who occasionally brought a peccary to bay. When these dogs saw that the Indian was ready to shoot his arrow they would cleverly draw under cover. As soon as the peccary was mortally wounded by an arrow the native hunter ran in on it and lanced it. Then he would cut out the offensive-smelling gland in the back and disembowel the animal, afterwards cutting it into two halves. A long stick was next obtained, sharp at both ends, the fore part of the peccary was spitted at one end and the hind part at the other. The bare part of the middle of the stick just fitted the hunter's shoulder, who thus carried his meat to the camp, where the women had remained.

They were acquainted with the use of salt, and sometimes obtained pieces of rock salt, which they greatly valued, seasoning their meals by licking the lumps of salt at intervals. But in many inland regions no salt was obtainable, therefore the meat was preserved for future use by smoking it over wood fires till it became as dry as a chip. In this condition it would keep for a great length of time. Both dried and fresh meat were often used as follows in a native cookery to which the European pioneers were very partial:—Into a large earthenware pipkin, half-full of water, were thrown pieces of dried or fresh meat, together with roots of various kinds, plantains, and a good deal of red pepper. The pipkin being placed over a wood fire, its contents were allowed to simmer slowly for seven or eight hours and never come

to the boil, thus by the evening the contents of the pot had been reduced to a savoury pulp or thick soup. This constituted the principal meal of the day, their hunger being stayed at other times by bananas, manioc, and dried maize. When the men had returned for their evening meal the stew was poured out into a large earthen dish or a big calabash, and this was placed on a great block of wood which stood in every house as a table. Round this block the people who were about to feast sat on small stools. If a more ceremonious feast was to take place a long table of wickerwork was made, and on this was spread plantain leaves for tablecloths. Every man was given a calabash of water at his right hand on the ground. In serving themselves to food they would dip the two fingers of the right hand, bent like a hook, into the dish and take up out of it as much food as they could, stroking it into their open mouths. After each mouthful they dipped their fingers into the calabash of water, either for cleanliness or for cooling. The meat would be excessively hot with red pepper.

The natives when they travelled guided themselves by the sun, or if the sun was invisible corrected themselves by the wind, according to the direction in which the branches were bent. If at a loss, they could generally determine the direction of north or south by cutting a notch into the bark of trees, the thickest side would always be towards the south (north of the Equator), or on the northern side of the tree to the south of the Equator. With one indication and another they passed through bogs, rivers, and forests, frequently without the sign of a path, avoiding obstacles, and yet keeping their way directly, for days together, seldom making any mistake. They swam the rivers—men, women, and children alike.

## The Spanish Discovery of America 53

Time during daylight was reckoned by the position of the sun, periods of time by the number of the moon's phases which had passed. But the more civilized peoples of Mexico and Peru measured the year, not by lunar months, but by the sun's return to fixed positions of rising and setting. In a general way, in fact, the calculation of the years was connected with the recurring seasons, which in turn depended on the sun's apparent relations with the earth.

Building in stone was really only practised by the tribes of superior culture in Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Peru. Elsewhere the human dwelling or the temple was built of sticks and clay, or sticks and thatch. Both clothing and religion were elaborate in the stone-building regions; elsewhere there was nearly complete nakedness (quite complete in Brazil), and a vague belief in spirits, demigods, and magic, with little in the way of ceremonies. The bulk of the Central and South Amerindian tribes were flat-faced with somewhat low-bridged noses; but the aristocratic and highly cultured moon-faced clans and castes in central and western South America had high, prominent noses, and resembled singularly in appearance the aristocratic type in Japan, Mongolia, and the western Pacific Archipelagoes. In all probability, these remarkable civilizations of Mexico, Central, and Andine South America were derived from eastern Asia by prehistoric maritime migrations of Caucasianized Mongols of Neolithic culture travelling to America by way of Alaska and California, or, more probably, across the Pacific from the Caroline Islands.

## CHAPTER II

### Spanish Pioneers in Tropical America

A VERY interesting light is thrown on the Spaniards' first impressions of the New World by the famous letter of DR. DIEGO ALVAREZ CHANCA.<sup>1</sup> This was addressed by him to the Municipal Council of the city of Seville in 1494. Dr. Chanca was the medical officer (as we should now call him) of the fleet which Columbus led on the *second* voyage of discovery in the New World. This fleet contained no less than 1500 persons, mostly Spaniards, who were proceeding to America either as the officers and seamen of the fleet or as settlers in these new lands. Amongst the great adventurers who sailed on this voyage were Juan Ponce de Leon, the future conqueror of Porto Rico [the man who went in search of the Fountain of Perpetual Youth, and in this quest discovered the beautiful peninsula of Florida, justly named thus for its wealth of flowers]; Alonso de Ojeda, the future discoverer and explorer of the north coast of South America; and Pedro Margarit, who subsequently discovered the small archipelago of the Margaritas islands off the north coast of Venezuela.<sup>2</sup> The great expedition of 1493-4 was a far different enterprise to that of Columbus's first voyage, when he set out with

<sup>1</sup> The best translation of this is given in the forty-eighth volume of the Smithsonian Collections, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> This group of islands he named apparently after himself, but by a curious coincidence their designation meant "pearls" in Spanish, and the islands were already famous amongst the Amerindian natives for the pearls which were found in the shell-fish along their coasts.

three small caravels carrying in all 120 persons. The fleet of September, 1493, was composed of three great galleons, or carracks, of approximately 400 tons capacity each, and fourteen caravels of different sizes. Amongst other features it was provided with twenty horses, to be subsequently ridden by Spanish lancers, and this small detachment of cavalry played a part of singular efficiency in the first conquests of the New World; for the Amerindians, unused (except in far-away Peru and Chile) to seeing men riding beasts, believed these mounted cavalrymen to be something equivalent to the myth of the centaur.

The fleet sailed from Cadiz on the 25th of September, 1493, "with wind and weather favourable to the voyage". The first stay was made at Grand Canary, and the next at the adjoining island of Gomera. From this island Columbus obtained eight pigs, two or three bulls, and a number of cows and calves, many sheep and goats, fowls and pigeons, and the seeds of oranges, lemons, bergamots, citrons, pomegranates, dates, olives, melons, and other European fruits, as well as all kinds of orchard and garden vegetables; and it was from this live stock and these seeds that sprang the greater part of the modern domestic animals of Tropical America, its orange groves, vineyards, and orchards.

Owing to contrary winds it actually took the fleet nearly twenty days to pass from Gomera to the outermost of the Canary group, the Island of Ferro. From Ferro the fleet sailed in splendid weather on a south-western course. After about eighteen days' voyage they observed some birds "called rabi-horcados [fork-tails—a great frigate bird] making circular flights high in the air, towards the close of evening". They realized that these

“marine birds of prey” do not sit or sleep on the water, that they must have some roosting place at night, and consequently land could not be far away. Two days afterwards the fleet came in sight of land. “The joy of the people was so great that it was wonderful to hear their cries and exclamations of pleasure; and they had good reason to be delighted, for they had become so wearied of bad living and of pumping the water out of the leaky ships, that all sighed most anxiously for land. . . . On the morning of the aforesaid Sunday we saw lying before us an island,<sup>1</sup> and soon on the right hand another appeared. The first was high and mountainous, the other very flat and thickly wooded [this was the small island of Marigalante, named after the big Admiral’s ship of the squadron, generally known as *La Capitana*, but really named the *Marigalante*]. As soon as the light of day became brighter, other islands began to appear on the right and on the left . . . most of them of considerable size. We directed our course towards that which we had first seen [Dominica] . . . we proceeded more than a league in search of a port where we might anchor, but did not find one. All that part of the island appeared beautiful and green, even down to the water’s edge. It was delightful to see, for at that season of the year there is scarcely anything green in our own country.” However, the admiral, Columbus, decided first to land and take possession (with the royal banner unfurled in his hands) of Marigalante. Here, in the midst of an astonishingly thick forest bearing an excellent variety of trees, some in fruit and some in flower, they discovered one, the leaf of which had the finest smell of cloves and seemed to be a species of laurel. Some of the seamen

<sup>1</sup> This was Dominica, so called because it was discovered on the Lord’s Day. It is now one of the British Leeward Islands.

began recklessly to eat the fruit of certain trees, but no sooner did these come in contact with their tongues than they suffered great heat and pain, and their mouths and cheeks became swollen. Apparently the island was uninhabited, so the fleet passed on to the adjoining Guadalupe, at a distance of about 24 miles. Guadalupe, as we now know, consists practically of two large islands divided by a narrow and probably artificial canal. Columbus approached it under the side of a great mountain, which seemed almost to reach to the skies (La Soufrière, 4500 feet high). From the middle of this mountain mass rose a peak higher than all the others, and from this many streams of water poured out in diverging channels down the flanks of the mountain range. One of these cascades seemed almost to be falling from the sky, and such was the height of the plunge that in its descent the water became dissipated into vapour. Many wagers were laid on board the ship as to whether after all this tremendous cascade was not a series of white rocks one on top of the other.

It has been thought subsequently that this wonderful sight, described in much detail by Dr. Chanca, and not corresponding exactly to anything now existing, may have been the outpouring of a vast stream of hot water from a lofty crater rising from the middle of this mountain mass; and that at a later date some tremendous explosion of earth forces took place (similar to that which recently devastated the not-far-distant island of Martinique), and blew away possibly the upper half of the precipitous peak which seemed to the Spaniards of such overwhelming altitude at that period; reducing it to the decayed volcano of La Soufrière, as it appears at the present day.



As soon as the fleet approached close to the shores of Guadalupe, Columbus ordered a light caravel to search along the coasts for a harbour. The captain of this small vessel got into his boat, and, seeing some huts on shore, landed and went up to them, the natives fleeing at the sight of him. He entered their houses and found therein many household articles that had been left unremoved, such as netted hammocks, utensils of earthen pottery, something that looked like an iron pot, and, most remarkable of all, *the stern-post of a European ship!* There were also gourds and calabashes, out of which cups, hollow dishes, bottles, &c., were made. Moreover, he found in these houses two tame parrots, very large and quite different from the parrots or parakeets which had been previously obtained by Columbus in regions farther north.<sup>1</sup> The captain also found a great quantity of cotton, both cotton wool just obtained from the seed vessels of the cotton plant and yarn already spun. Amongst the provisions of food which he brought back with him were five bones of human arms and legs. From these they at once suspected that they had reached the "Carib", or Cannibal, islands, whose inhabitants eat human flesh. They came to this conclusion because Columbus on his first voyage had already heard of such a race from the natives of Hispaniola (*Carib* meant "cruel" in the Arawak language).

The relatively large island now discovered was named by Columbus Guadalupe,<sup>2</sup> after a place in the province of

<sup>1</sup> This parrot may have been the *Chrysotis augusta* or *C. bouqueti* of Dominica; but more probably a now extinct species peculiar to the large island of Guadalupe. Each of the larger-sized West India islands, from Cuba and Porto Rico to St. Vincent, has one or more species of *Chrysotis* parrots—short-tailed, large-bodied parrots, with plumage that is mainly green, varied with blue, red, and yellow; but by far the largest and handsomest forms of *Chrysotis* are those found in the Windward Islands and Dominica, such as *Chrysotis augusta*.

<sup>2</sup> The native name of Guadalupe seems to have been equivalent to Turu Keira. The native name of Dominica was Kaire.

Estremadura, in south central Spain, where there was a famous sanctuary-monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary. This island, or rather these twin islands, appeared to the Spaniards to be very large (in reality only 616 square miles). The western half consisted of high volcanic mountains, while the eastern portion (the Grande Terre of to-day) was flat. The expedition came to an anchorage in what is now the bay of Pointe-à-Pitre. The next morning several detachments of officers and men started in different directions to explore the country. One of these parties returned in the middle of the day with a boy of about fourteen years of age, who explained (partly by gestures) that he was a prisoner taken by the Caribs. Probably Columbus had on board with him one or more of the Arawak Indians whom he had carried off to Spain from the Greater Antilles on his first voyage, and these may have served as interpreters. As the other detachments returned they brought with them more natives of the island, mostly women and children. Some of these were prisoners rescued from the Caribs, others were native women, who allowed themselves to be captured without much resistance. The men, however, proved very difficult to get hold of. Apparently the greater part of the men of Grande Terre had started off in their canoes to make a raid on some other island.

Dr. Chanca accompanied an expedition that went on shore, and with it visited several villages on or near the coast, finding in the houses a vast number of human bones and skulls, some of the skulls being turned into vessels for holding liquids. The villages were composed usually of twenty to thirty houses, square in shape for common people, and circular for the headmen or chiefs, all the houses being usually built round an open place or square

called *batey*. This word, together with the word *bohio*, for house or hut, seemed to be common to the Bahama Islands, the Greater Antilles, and Guadalupe, and no doubt was of Arawak origin. In one house, which apparently was a kind of temple, they found images of serpents tolerably well carved in wood. The framework of the houses was built of trunks of trees, usually the stem of the Royal palm. The interstices between these palm trunks were filled in with thin pliable boards, which were segments of the mid-rib of the palm fronds, or the spathes which cover the fruit of this palm. The roofs were thatched with palm fronds, and were built out in front to a sort of portico, which served as a shelter from the hot sun and the rain. Much of the material employed in building these huts, though derived from the sources mentioned, appeared to Dr. Chanca to be merely straw. A remarkable episode was their finding, in these Carib villages of Guadalupe, tame ducks, obviously the Musk Duck (*Cairina*), which could only have been brought originally by the Caribs from the basin of the Orinoko River, for the bird is not found wild away from the mainland of South America. This Musk Duck was afterwards brought to Europe by the Spaniards and Portuguese, and is now spread all over the world. The birds seen by Dr. Chanca must have been long domesticated, because some of them were snow white and others black.

The Spaniards were able to tell the difference between the Arawak prisoners and the Carib natives of Guadalupe by the custom of every Carib woman wearing two bands of woven cotton on each leg, one fastened round the knee and the other round the ankle. The captive Arawaks explained to the Spaniards that they were used with the utmost cruelty by the Carib men, and that any children

they bore were eaten, and all male prisoners brought to the island were at once devoured. These Arawak prisoners apparently were most of them derived from the large island of Porto Rico (then called Borinken). Apparently the Spaniards had also sighted, before arriving at Guadalupe, another large island lying to the south of Dominica. This was subsequently named Martinico, but its native name was Ayai. Perhaps this was discovered by the caravels and smaller vessels of the fleet, which were sent out by Columbus to search for harbours in all directions. Dr. Chanca gathered some information about it from the captives in the hands of the Spaniards at Guadalupe, and ascertained that it was inhabited by Caribs similar to those of Dominica and Guadalupe. Moreover, he made the shrewd guess that Martinique (as we now call it) was not the terminal island in that direction, but that there must be other islands, or even a continent, farther south. Perhaps the natives told him this, but he himself bases the guess on the presence of sea birds flying from the south. The natives of these three islands waged no war with one another, but only attacked inhabitants of other islands (probably those that were of the Arawak stock). In these wars they sometimes travelled as far as 500 miles in canoes—the very word “canoe”, from the Spanish *canoa*, being a Carib term (probably *kanawa*). These canoes were what we term “dug-outs”, being simply the single trunk of a tall tree excavated by fire and stone axes. The largest of them were big enough to hold forty to fifty persons. They were propelled by a long, broad, flat paddle of light wood. Sails were unknown to these aborigines of America. The arms with which they went forth to battle consisted of arrows headed with a sharpened piece of tortoise shell, or the spine of a fish, some of them

with barbed points, and probably in many cases poisoned with the juice of the Manchineel tree.<sup>1</sup>

Leaving Guadalupe, the Spanish fleet sailed northwards and discovered and named the islands of Montserrat and Antigua. The fleet came to an anchor in the harbour of the island of St. Martin. This island has an area of only 38 square miles; but at that time it was very populous, though without any streams, and dependent only on the rains for its supply of water. St. Martin was also apparently inhabited by Caribs, who were found wearing their hair very long for the most part, with their faces tatued with marks like crosses, and large circles round their eyes and eyebrows, stained with the deep-red dye of the Bixia tree (the same which produces the magenta colour painted on the exterior of Dutch cheeses).

On 14 November, 1493, the expedition reached the island of Santa Cruz, or rather the whole archipelago of the Virgin Islands, which the Spaniards at first thought might be continuous land. Finding it was divided up into more than forty islands, Columbus called the group after the 11,000 virgins, the legendary saints of the city of Cologne. From here they reached the large island of Porto Rico (the Spanish form of the name was Puerto Rico), then called by the natives Borinken (Borinquen). Borinken was guessed at as being a very large island (compared to the Lesser Antilles which they had just quitted, and the northernmost of which they described as "the last of the Carib islands"); and also the most beautiful: a perfectly true description at the present day. It was blessed with

<sup>1</sup> The Manchineel tree (*Hippomane mancinella*, of the Euphorbia family), which will often be referred to in this story, is found in all marshy districts along the coasts of the West India Islands and Central America. It grows to as much as 40 feet in height, and bears flowers something like those of a poppy, of a sickly yellow colour. The milky sap of flowers, leaves, and branches is a deadly poison.

a singularly fertile soil, and was inhabited by a dense population of Arawak Indians, who had already reached a certain degree of civilization, though they were neither courageous enough nor sufficiently well armed to withstand the constant attacks of the Caribs, who perpetually raided this island in order to capture women for their harims, and men and boys for eating. Yet the Borinken natives were found to be using bows and arrows much like those of the Caribs, and it was evident that if they succeeded in capturing any of these enemies they in their turn cooked and ate them.

From Porto Rico the fleet passed on at last to Hispaniola, where they were coming to the relief of the garrison left behind by Columbus the year before. They reached it on the south-east coast, where it was low and flat. This region was called by the natives Bohio, a long peninsula province on the north was named Samaná, but Haiti was the name given to the western portion first visited by Columbus, a name which is now applied to the independent Negro republic. The large size of this great island of Hispaniola was shrewdly surmised by Dr. Chanca. It is in reality about 400 miles long and 150 miles broad at its greatest breadth, with a total area of 28,250 square miles. He describes its appearance as most remarkable, for it contains a number of large rivers and extensive chains of very high mountains, between which are fertile, broad, open, valleys. "It looks as though the grass is never cut throughout the year. There must be no winter here, for at Christmas we found many birds' nests, some containing the young birds and others the eggs." Only one "four-footed animal" was to be seen in this island, except dogs belonging to the natives, which were of various colours, and in shape and size like lapdogs. The only

apparent indigenous mammal—subsequently called by the Spaniards *Hutia*—had a long tail, feet like those of a rat, and was similar in size and fur to a rabbit. It climbed the trees, and those that were caught and eaten by the Spaniards were pronounced very good.<sup>1</sup> The Spaniards, however, found many snakes (all harmless) in Hispaniola. Also lizards, but these were not so abundant, for the natives considered them as great a luxury as we do pheasants. One of these lizards, which the Spaniards saw on an islet off the coast (Monte Christo), was an iguana of very large size, with a body as big as a calf, and a tail shaped like a lance. The Spaniards tried to kill it, but it dashed through the thicket into the sea. The birds of Hispaniola were of infinite variety, but there were no domestic fowls, not even the tame ducks that were found on the island of Guadalupe. From this harbour of Monte Christo, where they had seen the big iguana, they landed at a large river of excellent water (now known as the Yaqui). When observing this river and its banks, to see if it was suited for a settlement, the Spaniards discovered the bodies of two dead men in their path along the river shore, one with a rope round his neck, and the other with a rope tied round the feet. On the following day they found two other corpses farther along the river. It was noticed that one of them had a great quantity of beard, “this was regarded as a very suspicious circumstance by many of us, because, as I have already said, all these Indians are beardless”.

<sup>1</sup> This creature was probably a now very rare form of *Hutia* (*Plagiodon aedium*), closely allied to the *Capromys* rodents of Cuba. But, perhaps unknown to Dr. Chanca, there was also the *Solenodon*, almost the largest of the *Insectivora* family. This is a distant ally of the hedgehogs and is more intimately related to creatures of somewhat similar aspect, the *Tenrecs* of Madagascar. It is found only in Hispaniola and Cuba, and has no near relations whatsoever in South America or North America, but has probably made its way to the Greater Antilles along some ancient connection with Africa.



CARIB INDIANS





The place where this discovery was made was about 31 miles from the place where Columbus had left a garrison of Spaniards, under the protection of a native chief called Guakamari, when he returned to Spain from his first voyage in 1492. The fleet proceeded to the site of this garrison ("La Natividad"—the Nativity of Christ, as it had been called) and ordered two cannon to be fired as a summons to any Spaniards that might be in the fort, knowing that they would probably respond by a salute of artillery; but no reply came, nor was there a sign of any Spaniard in or about the place. A great depression fell on the men of the Spanish fleet, and whilst their admiral, Columbus, was in perplexity of mind as to what course he should pursue, there arrived a canoe with several natives on board, who enquired in a loud voice for the admiral. They were conducted to the presence of Columbus and remained with him for three hours talking with him and the officers of the fleet—of course, through the Arawak interpreters, who had been taken to Spain and brought back. These people of Haiti related how the Spaniards left behind had either died of disease or in quarrels which had arisen between themselves, but that some remained who were quite well. The province in which this fort of La Natividad had been built had been invaded by two chiefs from the interior, who had burnt down most of the houses. Guakamari, the friendly chief, was lying ill of a wound in his leg, at some distance, which was why he did not come himself in person.

Next morning, when the Spaniards landed, they found that the fort (really a palisade surrounding a few houses, which had been built out of the remains of the *Santa Maria*, the largest of the three small caravels in which

Columbus made his previous voyage of 1492) had been levelled to the ground and all the buildings and fences burnt. There were no traces of any of the thirty-eight Spaniards who had been left behind to garrison this fort, and the natives who hung about the ruined settlement were very timid, and fled into the woods at the sight of the Spaniards.

Columbus, accompanied by several of his officers and Dr. Chanca, went to see Guakamari, and found him lying in a hammock of cotton network. He did not attempt to get out of the hammock, but gave them a courteous welcome, and explained with much feeling, and no doubt a good deal of gesture, how most of the Spaniards had died of disease, while the remainder had left the fortified settlement in search of gold mines and had been killed by the natives in the interior, the remainder being attacked and slain in the half-deserted fort. Guakamari then made a present of gold to Columbus, many precious stones of different colours, probably of no value, and a cap ornamented with similar coloured stones. The surgeon of the fleet and Dr. Chanca told Guakamari that they were skilled in the treatment of all human ills, and wished him to show them the wound in his leg. To this he consented, and then the doctors suggested it would be better to examine the wound outside the house, in the light and away from the concourse of people. But after untying the bandage that covered the supposed wound they found no visible sign of injury, and in fact came to the conclusion that the story of a wound was a fabrication.

Columbus was puzzled how to act. There clearly had been signs of a conflict, but he was not able to ascertain whether the natives under Guakamari had been treacherous, or whether the main attack on the Spaniards had been

carried out by hostile interior tribes. His fleet, at any rate, was visited by large numbers of Indians, who came under the leadership of their chiefs, and who brought their womenfolk with them, which did not suggest that as a nation they were already hostile to the Spaniards. The men of the Spanish fleet missed very much supplies of meat in their dietary, but found the fish of the sea coast abundant and nourishing, and the parties of Indians who arrived, and who seem to have been mainly Caribs, brought with them large supplies of a turnip-like vegetable, "very excellent and nutritious food, which they cook and prepare in various ways. It proved of the greatest benefit to us all after the privations we endured at sea which were more severe than man ever suffered." This root was called *nabi* by the Caribs, and *age* or *aipi* by the Arawaks. It was the manioc of Tropical America.<sup>1</sup>

Caribs and Arawaks alike went almost entirely naked, except that the married women wore a short petticoat round their hips, or woven skirts of grass or leaves. Both men and women painted their bodies, some with black, others with white and red devices and combinations, with effects which were sometimes not only weird but laughable. They shaved one part of the head and in another encouraged the hair to grow in long, matted tufts. "In short, whatever would be looked upon in our country as characteristic of a madman is here regarded by the most prominent Indians as a mark of distinction." They put more value upon copper than gold, yet they seemed to have a considerable supply of gold, and evidently obtained it from mines which were in the interior, about 50 to 60 miles inland, especially in the regions still known

<sup>1</sup> *Manihot aipi*, or perhaps *M. utilisissima* (see note on pp. 18, 19).

## 68      Pioneers in Tropical America

as Cibao<sup>1</sup>. This gold they hammered out with stone hammers into very thin plates, which they made into face masks, set in a cement prepared, no doubt, from the resin of a tree. They also made head ornaments of gold, ear-rings and nose-rings, necklaces and bracelets, the gold being generally beaten into the shape of a thin narrow plate. Their hatchets and axes were all made of stone, but they were handsome and well finished. Their principal food consisted of a "bread made of the root of a herb", probably the manioc already mentioned. Other vegetables were employed as a seasoning, especially in combination with the flesh of fish and birds. They seem also to have had maize, which Dr. Chanca describes as a kind of grain, in appearance like the hazel nut "very good to eat". They also ate all snakes and lizards, and even some spiders and worms.

The gold-bearing region was dominated by a Carib chief known as Caonabo, and the general name of Mangana was given to the province which he ruled. Two detachments of Spaniards from this expedition went to inspect the mountain ridge of Cibao, and saw gold in so many places, "more than fifty brooks and rivers, as well as upon their banks", that the leaders of the expedition declared there was enough gold there to enrich all the expedition, and brought back, in proof of their statements, a nugget that weighed 9 ounces. The second detachment visited the long valley of Niti and brought back an even larger nugget, which was conveyed to Spain. It was believed that by mining in a more scientific fashion immense quantities of gold could be obtained

<sup>1</sup>This name is said to have meant, in the Arawak language, "stone mountain". Another gold-bearing region was called Niti. This was a long valley, subsequently called, by the Spaniards, La Vega Real.

from Hispaniola, but this result has not yet been achieved, though there are some who think the original expectations of the pioneers were justified, and that when the republic of Santo Domingo is thoroughly opened up by Americans of the United States it will prove to be a great gold-producing country.

But the Spaniards soon exhausted the alluvial deposits, and then almost abandoned the island in disgust, especially as they suffered a good deal from malarial fever in Hispaniola and failed to realize the wonderful value of the great island as a food-producing region. However, Dr. Chanca did not omit to notice the cotton plants as large as peach trees, which all the year round produced cotton, and in abundance; and the trees yielding wax, as good in colour and smell as beeswax, and equally useful for burning; the vast number of trees that produced surprisingly fine turpentine, and the pines from which tar could be obtained; the fruit trees; the native ginger; the agaves; the yuccas; the gum-mastic, and many kinds of spice, of dyes, and drugs. But in their impatience to get rich quickly the Spaniards lost interest in Hispaniola after the first fifty years of colonization (during which they introduced the sugar cane, the banana, and other useful products from the tropics of the Old World). Cuba and Porto Rico were more strongly held to, either because their climate was healthier or the land less mountainous and more easily cultivated by Negro slaves. But the amazingly beautiful island of Hispaniola, which has the loftiest mountains in the West Indies, was almost entirely abandoned, except as regards the maintenance of the town of Santo Domingo on its south-east coast. The result—as will afterwards be seen—was that it lay open to settlement by English, French, and Ger-

adventurers—the famous Buccaneers—and thus gave harbourage to the rivals who were ultimately to break up the Spanish empire over the New World.

Meantime the Spaniards soon crossed over from the Greater Antilles to the mainland of Tropical America. Columbus, on his third voyage (1498–1500), discovered Trinidad, the delta of the Orinoko, and eastern Venezuela; and, on his fourth voyage (1502–4), the east coasts of Panamá, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras. That wonderful Florentine shipping clerk, AMERIGO VESPUCCI, came out on his second voyage<sup>1</sup> in 1499–1500 in a ship commanded by ALONSO DE OJEDA,<sup>2</sup> which, with a second vessel, commanded by Juan de la Cosa, seems to have made almost the entire circuit of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, passing also for some distance up the east coast of North America.

Probably the first authentic landing of the Spaniards to take possession of the mainland of Central America was that of BARTOLOMÉ COLON (Columbus's brother), who dis-

<sup>1</sup> His "first" voyage, apparently undertaken in 1497–8, is very vaguely and uncertainly described, but he is thought by some geographers to have anticipated Magellan and Sir Francis Drake, and to have rounded South America and penetrated up the Pacific coast to British Columbia. In all probability this great exploit did not take place.

<sup>2</sup> A characteristic story is told of this remarkable Spanish pioneer, Alonso de Ojeda or Hojeda. He was a native of the city of Cuenca, in central Spain. He had been a bold warrior in the recently terminated wars of Granada, and in order to impress Queen Isabella (of whose guard he was an officer), when she visited the great church of the Giralda at Seville, he performed the following feat of courage and address. In full armour and equipped as if for battle, he climbed the tower to near its summit, and then stepped out from the masonry of the building on to a great wooden beam which projected horizontally into the air some 25 feet outwards from the wall of the tower. He was here at such a great height above the ground that the people below him in the street looked like Lilliputians. He walked out along the beam briskly, and when at its extreme end he stood on one leg, lifting the other in the air; then, turning nimbly round, he walked back again, exhibiting no sign of giddiness. When reaching the other end of the beam, close to the wall of the tower, he stood with one foot resting on the beam, placed the other foot against the wall, drew an orange from a pocket, and threw it over the summit of the figure Giralda at the top of the tower.

embarked on the coast of Honduras at Punta Castilla (or Cape Honduras) on 17 August, 1502. Immediately after landing he took possession of the country in the names of the King and Queen of Castile-Aragon, and called it *Honduras*, from a Spanish word which means "depths" (deep places in water). The explanation of this is said to be that his pilot obtained unusually deep soundings close inshore. Soon afterwards Columbus himself on his fourth voyage, and in 1507 the captains JUAN DIAZ DE SOLIS and VICENTE YAÑEZ PINZON, examined the coast closely, from Costa Rica northwards to Yucatan, in the hope of being able to find a sea passage to the westwards to the real India or Japan, which, they were beginning to realize, must still be at some great distance from "the West Indies".

In 1513 VASCO NUNEZ BALBOA had crossed the Isthmus of Panamá from the Gulf of Darien, and on 25 September in that year beheld the Pacific Ocean stretching beyond the Bay of Panamá. He afterwards waded out into the waters of the great "Southern Ocean" and took possession of this mighty expanse of water for the ships and commerce of Spain.

In 1513, also, PONCE DE LEON had discovered and named the peninsula of Florida. Hernandez de Cordova examined the peninsula of Yucatan in 1517, and the celebrated HERNANDEZ CORTES in 1519 landed on the east coast of Mexico and conquered the southern part of that great empire for the crown of Spain. PEDRO DE ALVARADO in 1522-4 added Guatemala to the Spanish dominions.

The first Spanish explorers who penetrated through the forest belts along the coasts of Honduras, Guatemala, and Yucatan came upon what were even then abandoned and falling into ruin—the magnificent temples and palaces built



of stone and mortar, the encircling walls and moats of extensive cities, some of which must have covered spaces equal in area to that of ancient Rome or the London of the eighteenth century. There were obelisks covered with hieroglyphs, and columns grotesquely or even beautifully sculptured; painted and engraved pictures of men and beasts, and ideograms which no doubt told stories of the great conquests over man and nature on the part of the once civilized natives of this region. Apparently this development of the arts of building and decoration, and the densely populated cities, had been brought to a close by invasions from the direction of Mexico; and the Tolteks and Mayas, the Kiches and Waiknas, had been overcome and degraded by the attacks of the Aztecs and Nahuatl of Mexico. But a good deal of their downfall was due to incessant civil wars amongst themselves, between tribe and tribe, city and city, a condition of affairs which left what remained of their civilization powerless to resist the invasion of small bodies of Spaniards, armed with guns and gunpowder, and mounted on horses.

Against these fierce and resolute Europeans the resistance of the Amerindians of Yucatan and Guatemala availed but little, though some of the great cities in this region could send out bodies of over 70,000 fighting men, whose weapons were slings and stones, assagays and poisoned arrows, wooden pikes and swords, or clubs of wood into which pieces of sharp stone or the teeth of animals had been inserted. The shields with which they defended themselves were made of the tough hide of the tapir. But with their firearms and their sharp swords, daggers, and lances of steel, the Spaniards slaughtered these wretched creatures by tens of thousands in the battles which took place during the early sixteenth century. The

Spaniards were from the first regarded as supernatural beings, and were often spoken of by the term *teule*—god—in the Maya or Kiche languages. In some cases where parties of them came over on private adventure from Cuba, and reached the coast of Yucatan, they were received with warm friendliness and invited to land and “come home”; in fact, one of the promontories of Yucatan, Cape Catoche or Cotoch, derives its name from the Maya phrase with which the Spanish adventurers were greeted as the Indians came off to meet them in canoes—“Konesh kotoch”, meaning “Come home!”<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note the suggested origin of some other geographical names. Yucatan, which was applied at one time to the whole of the great projecting peninsula of south-east Mexico and northern Honduras, is probably derived from a Maya phrase, “Yukatta a tan”, meaning “We do not understand you”. One can well imagine the fierce Spaniards landing on the beach and demanding in Spanish, or, it may even be, in the language of the Arawak Indians,<sup>2</sup> the name of the new land, and the trembling natives replying: “We do not understand you”, a phrase which, as has so often happened in

<sup>1</sup> This information is derived from the very interesting work on British Honduras by Mr. Archibald Robertson Gibbs (London; 1883). Mr. Gibbs states that in modern Maya the phrase runs “Konesh notoch”. The first word was spelt by the Spaniards “Conex”, but was pronounced “Konesh”. At the close of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth century most Spaniards, like the Portuguese, used the letter *x* as the equivalent of the English *sh*, just as they pronounced *j* and the soft *g* like an English or a French *j*. It was only by the middle of the sixteenth century that the Castilian guttural pronunciation of these consonants was spread all over Spain and the New World.

<sup>2</sup> The first Spanish pioneers in this direction noted the fact that Arawak Indians from Jamaica occasionally reached these coasts in their canoes, and that their language was sometimes the means of intercourse with the absolutely unrelated indigenous tribes of Central America. This information enables us also to realize how in the past it was possible for Cuba and Hispaniola, and perhaps other islands of the Antilles, to be populated from the westward, from North-central America, the direction from which their first inhabitants seem to have come; though both Arawaks and Caribs were later invaders from north-eastern South America.

Africa and Malaysia, became henceforth the name applied to their country.

Vicente Yañez Pinzon, a Spanish sea captain, had preceded the Portuguese as a discoverer of Brazil, having explored that coast from Pernambuco to the mouth of the Amazon early in 1499. In the same year, two months later, the Portuguese voyager, CABRAL, accidentally hit off the coast of Brazil at Porto Seguro, some distance to the south of Bahia, when he was on a journey to the Cape of Good Hope; and Brazil (as the land was called by Cabral on account of its producing the deep-red-coloured brazil wood<sup>1</sup>) was adjudged to be Portuguese by the agreement between the kings of Spain and Portugal. Its coast was explored southwards between Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo by the Florentine Amerigo Vespucci on his third voyage in 1502. The Rio de la Plata and Uruguay were probably first reached by a Spanish explorer, Juan Diaz de Solis, in 1515; and de Solis was killed by the warlike Charrua Indians of Uruguay in 1516. The renegade Portuguese MAGALHÃES (Magellan), whose adventures have been more fully described in my works on the *Pioneers of India* and the *Pioneers of Malaysia*, conducted a Spanish expedition along the eastern coast of South America in 1519, which explored the coast of Patagonia and discovered the far-famed Magellan's Straits. SEBASTIAN CABOT, who had so much to do with the discovery of Newfoundland in the service of the British (see *Pioneers of Canada*), re-entered the employ of Spain,

<sup>1</sup>(See pp. 29, 30.) One of the first things the Portuguese noticed in landing near Pernambuco was the deep-red dyewood of a species of *Casalpinia* tree. This deep-red or bright-orange wood was already slightly known to Europeans and had begun to make a great impression on them by the vivid dyes which it produced for the colouring of woollen fabrics. Brazil was again visited by Portuguese ships in 1500, but the colonization of this vast area did not begin with anything like persistency until 1531.

and, between 1526 and 1530, in a wonderful boat voyage, laid down the main course of the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers which, united, form the estuaries of the Rio de la Plata. Between 1526 and 1533 the ruffianly FRANCISCO PIZARRO crossed the Isthmus of Panamá, fitted out an expedition on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and discovered and conquered the regions of Ecuador and Peru, which last country he penetrated as far south as Cuzco.

The discovery of the western side of South America was carried on between 1533 and 1544 by a number of bold Spanish pioneers, prominent amongst whom, in regard to the opening up of Chile, were JUAN DE SAAVEDRA, DIEGO ALMAGRO, and PEDRO DE VALDIVIA. North of Mexico proper, the Spaniards had by the year 1540 discovered the Colorado River and penetrated up the west coast of North America, as far as the peninsular region which they called California, after an imaginary country in a fairy romance published in Madrid about 1510.

ALONSO ALVAREZ DE PINEDA in 1519 had brought back some account of the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas coasts; and twenty years afterwards one of the greatest of Spanish pioneers, HERNANDO DE SOTO—who had between 1519 and 1530 explored Central America and Peru—resolved to find the reported gold mines and precious stones of “Florida”. Between 1539 and 1542 he (and, after his death, his lieutenant, de Alvarado) revealed the lower course of the Mississippi from Arkansas to the delta, and sketched in the northern coasts of the Gulf of Mexico.

The discovery of the great Strait of Juan de Fuca by the Greek pilot, Apostolos Valerianos, is probably a myth; but in 1543 a Spanish pilot, perhaps Bartolomé Ferrelo,

followed the west coast of North America as far north as the forty-second degree of latitude—the Oregon coast. Here Spanish pioneering work in the New World of the sixteenth century came to end, so far as coast discovery was concerned; the Spaniards being too busy now with the exploration and conquest of the interior of these rich islands and mainland of Tropical America to trouble themselves overmuch about the cold and seemingly valueless regions lying in the north and south temperate zones; regions which, nevertheless, were to become far more populous, rich, productive, and powerful than the Spanish Indies. After the middle of the sixteenth century the Spaniards and Portuguese abandoned the exploration of North America to the English and French, and of Temperate South America to the Dutch and English, and concentrated their own courage and determination on the tracing from source to sea of the great rivers of the South American continent—the Magdalena and the Orinoko, the Amazon system, and the great tributaries of the Paraná.

## CHAPTER III

### Spaniards reveal the Amazons and the Orinoko

THE marvellous river of the Amazons, which pours into the Atlantic probably the greatest volume of water contributed to an ocean by any river system, is in some respects less a river than a freshwater sea. It is, indeed, the development of what was once the Sea of the Amazons, a vast shallow lake which received the silt washed down by innumerable streams from the lofty Andes, the plateaus of Venezuela, and the highlands of Guiana and of northern Brazil. Becoming gradually filled up by these deposits, and its bed being also lifted by an uprise of this portion of the earth's surface, it grew in the course of time to be no longer a sea but a vast network of rivers feeding one central lake-like stream. Farther back in the history of the earth the Amazons Sea may have been joined, perhaps, to another huge inlet of the ocean, represented now by the Rio de la Plata river system. These two gulfs, when they united their arms, separated the large Brazilian Island from Andine South America. Long before man had reached South America the basin of the Amazons was no longer a vast lake with a narrow outlet between Pará and the Araguari, but instead had become an enormous fan-shaped plain, 2,300,000 square miles in extent, traversed by wellnigh countless rivers, all converging eastwards in the main course of the Amazons, and sending 550,000 cubic feet of water every second through the Amazons delta into

the Atlantic. This gigantic river system contains 45,000 miles of navigable water communication, and is further connected by a natural navigable canal with the basin of the Orinoko, so that eastern Venezuela and all Guiana are actually a vast insular territory entirely surrounded by water. It is little wonder that, with these means of access to almost all parts of the tropical South American interior, this continent was so quickly traversed and conquered by Spaniards and Portuguese, or that these facilities were so early envied by the other nations of western Europe.

The first and greatest pioneer on the Amazons, and the one who discovered the main course of this marvellous river from near its source to its mouth, was FRANCISCO DE ORELLANA. His expedition arose out of that of Gonzalo Pizarro.

GONZALO PIZARRO was the brother of the cruel *conquistador*, Francisco Pizarro, who for his services to Spain in the conquest of Peru and Ecuador had been made a marquis. The Marquis Pizarro had heard from the ancient Incas of Cuzco, that beyond the city of Quito (the region we now know as Ecuador) and beyond the limits of the empire formerly ruled by the Incas, there was a wide region where cinnamon grew.<sup>1</sup> Spice trees had been discovered, in 1536, east of the Andes, on the highlands of Ecuador sloping to the great plain of the Amazons. The Marquis Don Francisco de Pizarro resolved to send his brother, Gonzalo, to investigate this spice-bearing region.

Accordingly Gonzalo left Quito in 1539 with 150 Spanish horsemen and about 200 foot soldiers, 4000 Amer-

<sup>1</sup> The cinnamon tree referred to was probably a species of *Eugenia*, in any case a member, like the real cinnamon of Ceylon, of the Laurel family. But the cinnamon spice of Ceylon is derived from the inner bark of the branches. This South American cinnamon comes from the acorn-like fruits of a tall, large-leaved, laurel-like tree.

indian carriers laden with arms, supplies, and all things requisite—knives, hatchets, ropes, cords, and large nails—for the building of a ship. He also took 4000 pigs for food, and a flock of llamas as beasts of burden. After some hesitation, he had sent for Don Francisco de Orellana (then in charge of the port of Guayaquil) to be one of his principal officers. As the great expedition travelled northwards from Quito many warlike Indian tribes came to fight against it, but withdrew when they beheld the multitude of Spaniards, and above all the men on horseback. The expedition was then left in peace, but was presently nearly wrecked by an earthquake. The earth opened in many places, and immediately afterwards there fell torrents of rain accompanied by lightning and thunder. Then this great concourse of people—some 350 Spaniards and 4000 Indians, with their pigs and their llamas—were obliged to cross an extensive range of snowy mountains, where the snow fell in such quantities and where it was so cold that many of the natives were frozen to death, so that it became necessary to leave the herds of swine and some of the provisions behind. On descending the slopes of the Andes Mountains into the Amazon basin torrents of rain were falling (so unlike the dry climate of Peru), and scarcely ceased to fall for two months. Consequently the Spaniards suffered much in health, their clothes becoming rotten with the incessant rain. Here, on the line of the Equator, in a region called Sumako, they found the cinnamon trees “with large leaves like a laurel, the fruit growing in clusters and resembling an acorn or an olive”. The best trees were those cultivated by the natives, who in this region were numerous, and quite naked owing to the heat and the incessant rain.

In the district of Sumako there was apparently a large



population of Amerindians, and from them Gonzalo Pizarro sought to obtain all possible information regarding the countries which might lie to the east. If he did not receive the answers which he wished, and which seemed to suit his ideas and his plans, he sentenced the wretched natives to be tortured, burning some of them alive and causing others to be torn to pieces by dogs. Finally, he forced a number of them to accompany him as guides, and with them he entered the dense forests, where in many places the road had to be opened by main force and with the blows of hatchets. The guides, either from want of knowledge or from a desire to lead astray this expedition of cruel men, frequently lost the way. The Spaniards suffered much from hunger, having left their herds of pigs behind and being reduced now to feeding on such herbs, roots, and wild fruits as the forests supplied.

At length they arrived at a region called Kuka, or Koka, where the native chief received them well and supplied them with food—probably cultivated manioc and fish. At the principal town of this region they passed a large river, the Koka, which falls into the Napo, this last being a tributary of the Marañon or Amazons. After a period of two months' rest in Sumako the expedition followed the banks of the Koka for some 150 miles, finding neither ford nor bridge by which they might pass over this very broad river. But all at once they came to a place where the Koka precipitated itself over a great rock in falls 200 feet deep, with a noise that was audible at a distance of 15 miles. Another 150 miles lower down its course the River Koka passed through a deep and narrow rocky channel, so narrow that at the top it was only some 20 feet from one bank to the other, the water flowing at a distance of over 200 feet below. Consequently, to cross the river here and



INDIANS OF THE AMAZON



proceed in a more southerly direction, it was only necessary to bridge this chasm. The natives who dwelt on the other bank of the Koka, and were anything but willing that these devastating Spaniards should enter their country, attempted to oppose the making of a bridge, but they were soon put to flight by the discharge of firearms. In the first attempt to place a great beam across the narrow gorge one of the Spaniards, wishing to look at the furious rush of water from the top of the rock, became giddy and fell in.

However, at last a bridge was made by the uniting of many beams, and over it all the men and horses safely passed to the other side. For many days afterwards they wandered through the scantily populated forests, suffering terribly from hunger, fatigue, and the incessant rain; so that many of the Spaniards and Indians fell sick and died. At last they reached a more civilized land, where the natives cultivated maize and dressed in cotton clothes. In this region they decided to build a ship, in which they might either cross the river or even navigate it, the stream being here about 6 miles broad. Accordingly they set up a forge for making nails, and burnt charcoal with great trouble, for the heavy rains prevented the tinder from taking fire. Many thatched sheds were erected under which to carry on this work, to protect it from the incessant rain. The horses were dying fast, and the iron shoes were taken off their feet so as to be made into nails for shipbuilding. Iron was now found to be more valuable than gold. Their leader, Gonzalo Pizarro, though like his brother an exceedingly cruel man, was a hero in work as well as in war. It is recorded that he was the first to cut the wood, to forge the iron, to burn the charcoal, and to employ himself in any capacity so as to encourage the

rest of his men. In order to caulk the seams of their vessels they obtained resin from the trees; for oakum they used old garments and blankets, all being ready to give up their clothes, because they believed that the remedy for all their misfortunes would be the making of this "brigantine".

When the ship was finished, with great relief to their wretched Amerindian porters, they put nearly all their goods on board, and more than 100,000 dollars in gold and many fine emeralds—all these, no doubt, obtained from the natives they had plundered on the road. The sick also were accommodated on the ship. Then the expedition started from this place and began the descent of the Koka River, some by land, others on board the brigantine, never being far from each other, and endeavouring each night to stop and sleep at the same place. Progress was very slow, because those on shore had to open the road in many places by cutting the trees down with axes, while those on the ship had to resist as far as possible making a rapid advance with the current, so as not to distance their comrades on the land. Sometimes the land party was obliged to cross the river in the ship and in four canoes which they had obtained from the natives. At last, after having travelled in this amphibious manner for more than two months, they met some natives who told them by signs, and by means of some words understood by their own Indians, that after ten days' more travel they would reach an inhabited land well supplied with provisions and rich in gold, on the banks of another great river (the Napo) that joined the Koka, down which they were travelling.

Pizarro now chose Don Francisco de Orellana, his lieutenant, to be captain of the brigantine, and placed him

on board with fifty soldiers, ordering him to proceed to this region indicated by the Indians, and having arrived at the junction of the Koka and the Napo to load up with provisions and return upstream to relieve the rest of the expedition, which was so afflicted with hunger and which was daily losing men by famine, Spaniards as well as Amerindians, 2000 in all having already perished.

This was alike the temptation and opportunity of Orellana. He reached this junction of the Rivers Napo and Koka in three days, merely with the force of the current, and without using either oar or sail. But the land was not rich in provisions, as he had been led to believe, and he considered it almost impossible to return the way he had come owing to the force of the current. Besides, what would be the use of returning with infinite labour merely to tell Pizarro that he had found no provisions? Accordingly he decided to descend the marvellous stream flowing south-eastward, and perhaps thus reach the Atlantic Ocean and Spain. Several persons amongst the fifty Spaniards who accompanied Orellana protested against his deserting his leader. One of these, Hernan Sanchez, he deposited on the banks of the Napo, and left him there to starve or rejoin Pizarro (a feat which he actually accomplished).

As to Gonzalo Pizarro, as soon as he realized the desertion of Orellana with the brigantine, he decided that at all costs his expedition must turn round and make its way back to Quito. Then ensued almost unimaginable hardships. It was impossible to ascend the currents of the flooded rivers, so the journey had to be made by land through trackless forests, with trees so huge sometimes that their trunks could not be spanned by a circle of sixteen men with extended arms, and where the ground was often covered to a depth of 2 or 3 feet with water. Hunger

constantly assailed them; first the horses and then the dogs were devoured by the famished men, and when any man—Spaniard or Amerindian—died, his flesh was also consumed. Nevertheless the wretched Amerindians stuck to their Spanish masters with extraordinary devotion, seeking for them everywhere food in the shape of frogs, lizards, fish, insects, wild fruits, and roots. Occasionally some small beast was captured, amongst others an opossum, which is described as “putting its young into a pouch in its bosom”. The Spaniards had long since lost all vestiges of clothing, and made for themselves girdles of leaves. At last, after travelling westwards towards the mountains, they quitted the accursed forest for more open, grassy plains, where there were deer, which they killed with stones hurled from slings and by other means. They were then able to make primitive garments for themselves out of the deerskins; but out of the 4350 Spaniards and Amerindians who started on this expedition only 80 Spaniards survived to reach Quito.

Meantime Francisco de Orellana, with his Spanish crew of more or less fifty and a few Indians, were carried at great speed down the Napo into the Marañon,<sup>1</sup> and along the broad, turbid course of the Marañon or Amazonas

<sup>1</sup> The main stream of the Marañon-Amazonas issues from the heart of the Andes in central Peru at a distance of only 140 miles from the Pacific Ocean, while its great southern branch, the Ucayale-Aparimac, rises not far from Cuzco, where this expedition was first projected. The origin of the name Marañon is much disputed. Some think that it is derived from a Spanish word, *Maraña*, which means a labyrinth, or a thicket of brambles, and likewise a series of tiresome plots and intrigues; and that it was applied to this great river either on account of the many puzzling channels and passages between thickets of trees and water vegetation, or, at somewhat later date, because of the terrible quarrels and disputes connected with the expedition of Don Pedro de Ursua, whose mutinous soldiers called themselves the *Marañones*. But Marañon may also have been a native name applied to the head stream of the Amazonas in Peru. The main stream of the Marañon, below its junction with the Javary, was afterwards named the “Amazonas” by Orellana on account of the numbers of native women—or what seemed to him to be women—who fought in the skirmishes by which the natives attempted to oppose the passage of the Spaniards.

eastwards in an irresistible advance towards the distant Atlantic Ocean. Hunger again afflicted the crew, who found themselves with nothing to eat but the skins which formed their girdles, and a few herbs gathered on the banks. At last, on 8 January, 1541, they heard the drums of the natives, and presently came on a village ready to receive them in a warlike fashion. The Spaniards landed, and, with the courage of despair, attacked the natives, who fled, leaving quantities of provisions behind them, on which the Spaniards at once fell with ravenous appetite. Presently some of the natives began to return to see what had happened, and, getting into communication with them (mainly by signs and offering them presents), they entered into peaceful relations, and at once brought an abundance of "peacocks" (really the tame curassows, a splendid gallinaceous bird the size of a turkey), guans, fish, and other things. At this place they resolved, when a good opportunity should arise, to make another vessel in which to continue their voyage in greater safety. And in twenty days, though unaccustomed to such work, by means of the forge which had been put on board, they made 2000 nails. Nevertheless, in order not to exhaust the local stock of provisions, they continued their journey to a point about 600 to 700 miles farther east, the country of a chief called Aparia, where they found a friendly region apparently well supplied with provisions (amongst other things, river turtles and parrots, guans—which the Spaniards called partridges—and fish), and here they decided to construct their new ship. In thirty-five days this vessel was made and launched, caulked with cotton and resin from the trees. Again they set out, still scantily fed, however, on herbs, roasted Indian corn, an occasional fish, or a large iguana lizard. They entered a region of hostile Indians, who



defended themselves with shields made of the skins of the tapir or the iguana lizard. The gunpowder on board had become damp, and the Spaniards had, therefore, to oppose their assailants with their crossbows. Here and there they captured a village and a supply of provisions, consisting mainly of a biscuit made out of maize flour, and supplies of roots and fruits.

In some of the houses of this region (between the Yapura and the Amazons) they found excellent pottery, and even what seemed to them goblets of glass enamelled with bright colours; also extraordinary idols, carved out of palm trunks, of gigantic stature, with joints to the arms. There were, further, many objects and ornaments of gold and silver.<sup>1</sup> All these things seemed, from what the Indians indicated, to have come from the mysterious country of Cundinamarca, far to the north, in fact from the region of the Chibcha civilization of Bogotá. After many days' journeyings they passed the junction of the Rio Negro, with water as black as ink, the force of which was so great that for more than 20 leagues its waters flowed separately without mingling with those of the Amazon. The river banks were now so far apart that they could not be seen from the middle of the stream. Between the Rio Negro and the Trombetas was a vast country well populated with Amerindians, sometimes friendly and sometimes warlike; and it was in this region, where there seemed to be so many warlike women, that the name of Amazons was specially applied to the river. But provisions were abundant—maize, turtles, curassows, parrots, and fish. Here, also, they learnt from an occasional captive Indian that far away to the north there were many men like the Spaniards, and even Spanish women,

<sup>1</sup> Silver was not nearly as much used by the Amerindians as gold and copper.

who were occasionally captured by the natives and brought south into the region of the Amazons. At the mouth of the small Trombetas River a terrific fight occurred. Orellana was obliged to bring his ship to a standstill, land his men, and engage a force of several thousand natives, who fought most obstinately, taking no notice of the number killed and wounded. Amongst the fighters were women, who appeared to be very tall, robust, and light skinned, with long hair twisted over their heads. At a village on an island farther east they were assailed by a great flight of arrows, which took them by surprise, as they had not put up their armour of cotton cloth round the ship, which they had devised in the early part of the voyage. Consequently one of the two priests—Carbajal—was so badly wounded by an arrow in the eye that it caused him to lose the use of it. This was a great trouble to the party, “because this father, besides being very religious, assisted them in their difficulties by his cheerfulness and sagacity”. In the country of the Tapuyos, after having sustained many fights with the natives, they nearly lost one of their two ships; one, in fact, sank, after striking on a snag, whilst the other was left on a sandbank high and dry by the tide, which had now begun to influence the rise and fall of the great stream. At this moment they were attacked by a great multitude of natives; but whilst half the company fought these adversaries and their poisoned arrows, the other half got the large vessel afloat and stuffed up the hole in the half-sunken one, and eventually all embarked safely and slept in midchannel. In an uninhabited district farther east they remained for eighteen days to repair their vessels before they should reach the sea, and here their hunger was allayed (providentially, as they declared) by their encountering a tapir as big as a mule, which

came down to the river to drink. This they killed, and it supplied them with meat for four or five days.

Having arrived near the sea, they made rigging out of plaited grass, and sails out of their blankets. On or near the seacoast they stayed for fourteen days, devouring the shellfish so abundant on the shores; and thus strengthened they left the mouth of the Amazon on 26 August, 1541, finding friendly Indians in this coast region who gave them provisions and fresh water. Without either pilot, compass, or anything useful for navigation, they sailed northwards, keeping the land carefully in sight, until at length they sailed past Guiana and the Orinoko delta into the sheltered Gulf of Paria. Passing out between this gulf and Trinidad, they continued their voyage till they came to the little island of Cubagua, which lies to the north of Venezuela, opposite Cumana. Here they were well received by their astonished countrymen, and from this point they proceeded to what we should now call Port of Spain, on the Island of Trinidad.

Both vessels, namely the one that was built at the junction of the Koka and the Napo, and the other constructed near the mouth of the Javary, came thus into safety after the most wonderful river voyage probably ever recorded in history, the only parallel to which is Stanley's descent of the Congo. Orellana left the junction of the Napo and the Koka on the frontiers of Ecuador about 1 January, 1541, and after descending the Marañon-Amazon to its mouth in two little wooden vessels, built on the upper waters of the Amazon, he reached Port of Spain in Trinidad on 11 September in the same year. Truly there were giants in those days!

At Port of Spain Orellana bought a ship, sailed to Spain, besought the king to give him a commission to

conquer the basin of the Amazons, received this commission, and started again in 1542 with an expedition of 500 soldiers. But he died at sea when sailing across to South America, and his expedition came to nothing. The greater part of the basin of the Amazons was subsequently secured by the Portuguese, and added to Brazil. But all the great pioneering work on the western Amazonian tributaries was done by Spaniards; who, indeed, in the expedition organized and led by the wicked LOPE DE AGUIRRE (who murdered his commander, PEDRO DE URSUA, near the junction of the Putumayu and the Amazon on 1 January, 1561), descended the Marañon from Peru, crossed over from the Amazon to its northern tributary the Rio Negro, followed this great lake-like river upstream to the natural canal called Kassikiari, and thence passed into the Orinoko,<sup>1</sup> out into the Atlantic, and back westwards to Venezuela.<sup>2</sup>

To recur, however, to earlier explorations of the Spanish Main, it is noteworthy in the pioneering history of northern South America under Spanish rule to observe the enterprise of certain Germans introduced through the influence of Charles V. This monarch, although King of Spain, always remained a German in heart, as he was

<sup>1</sup> The first explorer of the Orinoko, the great river of northern South America, seems to have been IAGO DE ORDAZ, who began to ascend it in 1531. The first missionaries who arrived in this region were two Jesuits, Ignacio Llauri and Julian Vergara, who reached the Orinoko in 1576, and settled at its junction with the Karoni. Their settlement—San Tomas de Guayana—was destroyed by a Dutch expedition which ascended the Orinoko in 1579 under the command of Captain Adriaan Janssen. The priests and their converts fled before the fierce Dutchmen far into the interior, where most of the priests died of starvation. The town of San Tomas was rebuilt, but was again destroyed by the Dutch under Keymis in 1618.

<sup>2</sup> The name, of course, means Little Venice. It was given to this region because in Lake Maracaibo the natives were found living in houses raised on piles in the shallow water. Alonso de Ojeda, who first cruised along this coast in 1499, called the country "Venecia".

also a German in appearance and mode of thought, besides being emperor over such a large extent of Germanic territory. His greatest sympathies, perhaps, were with his Netherlands provinces—the modern Belgium and Holland, the people of which were not in those days called Belgians, Dutch, or Hollanders, but simply Flemings. Flanders was the name given to the southern part of the Netherlands; at that period the richest, best-educated, and most enterprising district in Europe. Both Flemings and Hollanders were, as a matter of fact, descended in the main from the Franks who conquered France. They represented that portion of the Frankish nation which retained its old Germanic dialect and refused to adopt a corrupt Latin speech. The northernmost populations in Holland were not called Flemings but Frisians, and spoke then, as now, a language which was simply Anglo-Saxon. They were indistinguishable in those days from Germans, but being subjects of the Holy Roman (German) Empire, whose emperor was at that time also King of Spain, they were as free to go to the Spanish dominions in the New World as any native of Castile or Aragon. But Germans were recruited from other parts of the Holy Roman Empire besides Friesland; from Bohemia, Saxony, the Rhine, Hamburg, and Bremen. They were in great request as miners, artillerymen, engineers, soldiers, and stolid, solid colonists. In their association with Spaniards they quickly adopted the use of the Spanish language, and even altered their names to a more Spanish aspect. But a great deal of the success of the Spanish colonization of Tropical America was due to the work of German artisans and soldiers, and even of German priests who went out as Catholic missionaries.

Early in the sixteenth century Charles V made an

## The Amazons and the Orinoko 91

arrangement with the German banking house of Velser (Welser) of Augsburg, to establish a German colony on the north coast of Venezuela. This firm sent out as their agents persons who are known to us by their Hispanicized names of Alfinger and Sailer. These men were named Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony and sailed from Spain to take possession of it with 300 Spaniards and perhaps 100 Germans. They also took fifty horses, and landed in 1528 at a place called Coro on the coast of Venezuela. Leaving Sailer in command of Coro, ALFINGER, two years later, advanced into the interior with 200 men and several hundred unfortunate Amerindians to search for a rumoured land rich in gold. He had made slaves of his Indian porters with the tacit permission of the Spanish Government. They were laden with provisions and stores, but they were treated by Alfinger and his companions with the most shocking barbarity. To prevent them from deserting, the Spanish soldiers fastened them to a chain by a ring round their necks. If one man fainted or even died on the march, it was necessary to undo the fastenings of the whole row of porters before his body could be removed. Therefore, to save time, whether he was dead or alive, they cut off the head and let the body drop out from the neck collar, giving as their excuse that as it was necessary to leave him behind it was the same to them whether he was dead or alive.

Alfinger reached the Magdalena River at a great lagoon which was dotted with islands. The natives fled before his expedition, and took refuge on the islands, but the greedy Spaniards, seeing the glitter of their golden ornaments from the distance, spurred their horses into the lake and swam them over to one of the islands, where

the terrified Amerindians at once surrendered. Many of them were killed and the rest retained as prisoners. The chief of the district gave himself up and supplied the Spaniards with all the gold ornaments he could collect and plenty of provisions. So great was the spoil that Alfinger sent twenty-five of his men back to Coro with plunder valued at 60,000 dollars. He waited in this district for a whole year until these men should return with the horses and arms he had sent them to buy. But apparently they were false to him, and, his patience at last worn out, he set off farther into the interior without waiting for these further supplies. His expedition followed upstream the course of the Magdalena, living on wild fruits and insects, tormented with mosquitoes, and suffering from malarial fever. The conditions of life in this hot, insect-infested valley of the Magdalena becoming intolerable, Alfinger led his men up into the lofty mountains into a country so cold that many of his Spaniards and 300 of his naked Indian porters were frozen to death. The only food they could obtain here consisted of snails. The relics of the expedition descended then into a valley, where they were exposed to constant attacks from more warlike Indians than those they had so horribly maltreated. Alfinger was wounded by a poisoned arrow in the neck, and died in three days. The remnant of his expedition then reached another valley—that of Kukuta. Here, rendered frantic by their suffering, they killed every man, woman, and child whom they met on their line of march. At length, in 1532, after they had been absent from the coast two years, the survivors of this first expedition in search of "El Dorado"<sup>1</sup> found their way back to the Venezuela coast.

<sup>1</sup> The legend of El Dorado or "the Golden Chief" is described on pp. 95, 96. But

## The Amazons and the Orinoko 93

Shortly afterwards another expedition was organized and placed under the command of a native of Speyer, in the Bavarian Palatinate, who is simply called GEORGE OF SPEIR (Spire). His lieutenant was another German, named FEDERMANN. This expedition of 400 men, 100 of whom were mounted on horses, avoided the mountains as much as possible but advanced resolutely southwards, marching upwards of 1500 miles into the interior of South America, during an absence of three years, and reaching the Caqueta or Jubura River, an affluent of the main Amazons. The Knight or "Ritter" Georg of Speyer was said to have been a mild, good man, and his expedition, though it fought much with the natives, only did so in self-defence. It suffered from many difficulties in crossing deep, swollen rivers with the horses; from hunger and want of provisions; and above all from swarms of mosquitoes. During the dry season there was an abundance of deer on the plains, which supplied the Spaniards and Germans with excellent venison; but when the rains came on the country was inundated, and over considerable areas it was a shallow lake. At this time the only food obtainable was the fruit of certain palms and wild roots. Moreover, throughout this region the jaguars in those days were so numerous and ferocious that they not only killed several members of the party, but boldly carried off their horses in broad daylight. The expedition did not succeed in reaching any wonderful gold-bearing country. In 1537 Ritter Georg was followed up by his lieutenant, Niklaus Federmann, with reinforcements and supplies. But this lieutenant, before actually joining

at the time the German adventurers arrived on the Venezuelan coast there was probably no definite story of this godlike potentate—merely a vague knowledge of the stores of gold and silver possessed by the Chibcha people.



Georg, decided to go off in a different direction on his own account. He travelled more to the westward, crossed the great Meta tributary of the Orinoko, and finally, after traversing the lofty mountains to the west of the Meta, ascended on to the plateau of Bogotá, and there met one of the great Spanish conquistadors, DON GONZALO XIMENES DE QUESADA.

Quesada was a great hero of Spanish discovery, and is as remarkable in his way as either Cortes or Pizarro. Like them, he discovered and conquered a celebrated Amerindian state or confederation, that of the Chibchas, which centred on the plateau of Bogotá, now the metropolitan district of the great republic of Colombia. This wonderful region, called, down to the early nineteenth century, "New Granada", contained an enormous wealth of gold, silver, and emeralds, amassed by the Amerindians in their cities and burial places. Out of one town alone (Tunja) the expedition of Quesada took £38,258 worth of fine gold and £7457 worth of rough gold; £3674 worth of silver and 1815 emeralds. SEBASTIAN DE BELALCAZAR had marched from northern Peru through Ecuador into New Granada, and when these two commanders were joined by the expedition of Federmann they journeyed together down the River Magdalena to the seacoast, leaving Hernan de Quesada, the brother of the conquistador, in command at Bogotá.

This man brutally murdered the young Amerindian chief of Bogotá, much loved by his native subjects, as well as three other chiefs, in order to overawe the natives into humble submission to the Spanish garrison at Bogotá, whilst he went off on his own account to seek for the House of the Sun and the wonderful kingdom of El Dorado. But he only wandered through desolate forests

until he reached the lands of the warlike Musos, or Moshos, Indians. Here his expedition nearly perished from starvation, and had to eat up all its horses as well as the donkey on which its father confessor rode.

The chief source of the El Dorado legend probably lay in the true accounts transmitted by natives to Spanish missionaries (and long afterwards confirmed by archaeological discoveries) of the ceremonial connected with the Chibcha chiefs of Colombia. These chiefs—of Bogotá, Tunja, Guatabita, and Iraka—were regarded as semi-divine by their subjects. Their garments were of the finest cotton,<sup>1</sup> their thrones of gold were studded with emeralds. They travelled in litters hung with golden plates, their headdresses were of gold, and a golden crescent ornamented the brow. They wore nose and ear ornaments and breastplates of the same metal. For five years or more before succeeding to the throne the heir to the chieftdom must be secluded in a temple during the daytime, only coming out at night. He must mortify his flesh with frequent scourgings and fasts, and abstain from meat, salt, and red pepper. At the end of this long period of probation his nose and ears were pierced for the gold ornaments which he was subsequently entitled to wear, and he made an offering of golden figures of animals to the gods. The ceremonies attending the installation of the chief were conducted with great state, especially those connected with the chief of Guatabita. He, indeed, was “El Dorado”, “the Gilded”. At the time of his installation in the chieftainship, the population of the neighbourhood repaired to the shores of the sacred lake of Guatabita clad in their finest ornaments of gold. Innumerable sacrificial fires were kindled on

<sup>1</sup> See *South American Archaeology*, by Thomas A. Joyce, M.A.

the banks, into which gums and resins were thrown which perfumed the air with clouds of incense. The new ruler was stripped of his garments, plastered all over with a sticky clay, and then powdered with gold dust. This golden being, attended by four sub-chiefs, afterwards embarked upon a raft made of reeds, ornamented with gold, and furnished with four braziers for burning incense. At his feet was piled a mound of gold and emeralds, and amidst shouts of the multitude, and the sound of whistles and other instruments, he was paddled or poled out into the middle of the lake. There he plunged into the waters and washed off the coating of clay and gold dust, which together with the gold and emeralds were considered to be offerings made to the gods. The new chieftain then returned naked to the shore and was henceforth the god-like ruler of the district.<sup>1</sup>

In 1541 another German pioneer, PHILIP VON HUTEN, sent out by the house of Velser, and beloved by his men and by the Amerindians for his humanity and kindness, organized a great expedition to search for El Dorado. After many disappointments and sufferings, due partly to their having followed here and there in the track of the devastating Hernan Quesada, they at length reached a city of the Waupé, or Guaypé, Indians. On the way thither sickness and famine had pressed hard on this expedition. The men could only appease their hunger by placing the bare cobs of maize at the mouths of ants' nests

<sup>1</sup> One description of him in Spanish, written by Francisco Lopez de Gomara, in his *General History of the Indies*, published first about 1552-3, may be given as follows: 'All the service of his house, his table and kitchen, was of gold and silver, except the meaner or rougher utensils, which were made of silver or copper, for their greater hardness and strength. This monarch had in his wardrobe hollow statues of gold which seemed gigantic, and figures in proportion of all the beasts, birds, trees, and herbs that his country produced, or fishes found in the waters of the land. He had also ropes, bundles, chests, and troughs of gold and silver, and ingots of gold shaped like pieces of firewood.'

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

(From an engraving in  
*Lodge's Portraits.*)



SIR JOHN HAWKINS



(probably termites or "white ants" are meant). The ants swarmed out and covered the cobs, and were then brushed off and roasted. Wild fruits, which had been recklessly eaten, poisoned some of the men and most of the horses. However, in the vicinity of Makatoa they were met by the son of the chief of the place with five canoes, which ferried them across the river to the Indian settlement, where, to their great relief and joy, they were supplied with venison, fish, maize, and manioc roots. The city of Makatoa was found to consist of well-constructed houses in streets at regulated intervals, and contained a population of about 800 of the Waupé Indians. Their chief was a man of middle age, well built, with an aquiline nose and fine countenance.

This chief advised von Hutten not to advance into the territory of the Omagua Indians, as, although these people possessed much gold and silver, they were powerful and warlike. In spite of this warning, however, von Hutten entered the Omagua country, and reached one of the towns where the streets were straight, with the houses touching each other, and where there was an edifice of great height in the centre. This, according to the Amerindian guides of the German-Spanish expedition, was not only inhabited by the principal chief of the Omagua, but also served as a temple and contained many idols of gold. Stimulated by von Hutten's promise of booty equitably shared, the Germans and Spaniards (400 or 500 in number) charged down a hill and attempted to force their way into the city. But the Omagua Indians came out in great force to the sound of drums. Von Hutten was severely wounded, and the whole expedition retreated rapidly, harassed by a large army of Omaguas who followed them, until at last the rearguard of the Spaniards turned and inflicted such

## 98      Pioneers in Tropical America

punishment on the Amerindians that they abandoned any further pursuit. Von Hutten was carried off the field of battle in a hammock by his friendly native guides, and when he reached Makatoa the chief of the Waupé himself attended to his wound.<sup>1</sup>

However, when von Hutten and Velser reached Coro, on the Venezuelan coast, they were arrested by a Spanish soldier, Carbajal, who had seized the government in their absence. Their hands were tied behind their backs, and their heads brutally hacked off with a blunt hatchet used for chopping wood.

With the deaths of these two adventurous knights, in 1543, ended the rôle of the early German pioneers in Venezuela. The ferocious Spaniard who murdered them (yet who, like Pizarro, could combine with ferocity a practical genius for the founding of cities and the planting of wheat, cotton, and sugar cane) was tried and executed for his crimes three years afterwards.

<sup>1</sup> Kind as this chief could be to the intruding European to whom he had pledged faith, he could be pitiless towards his own Amerindian slaves. As he was puzzled over the means of tracing von Hutten's wound, he caused an old slave to be put into the armour of the German knight and set up on horseback. Then, while in this position, a Waupé warrior wounded him in the same way that the Omaguas had wounded the German. The armour was removed, the old slave was cut up and anatomized, until by this vivisection the Waupé chief was able to guess at what had happened to von Hutten, and what remedies might be applied.

## CHAPTER IV

### Rivals to the Spaniard: Hawkins, Drake, and Oxenham

OF course, as related in another book of this series, the New World had been discovered by Europeans long before the adventure of Columbus; for undoubtedly the Norsemen had voyaged from Iceland to Greenland, and from Greenland as far south as Newfoundland and Nova Scotia by the eleventh century, A.D.; and only a few years after Columbus had reached the West Indies, and even before the results of his journey had been made widely known in Europe, another great Italian pioneer—Cabot—had led an English expedition, with the approval of Henry VII, to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, a region soon afterwards visited by Portuguese from the Azores Islands. But nevertheless, for about thirty years after the first voyage of Columbus, the seamen of other European nations left the New World pretty much alone, to be grabbed and utilized to a very large extent by the Crowns of Castile-Aragon—soon to be called Spain—and Portugal. All the western world at that time belonged to the Roman Catholic Church, and to some extent the princes of western Europe were influenced by the Papal decision which gave to Spain and Portugal a monopoly of the newly discovered lands.

But after he came to the throne in 1515 Francis I had shown little respect for the Pope's authority in such matters as oversea adventure, and did not attempt to check French



navigators who were prepared to set the Spanish and Portuguese monopoly at defiance. Indeed Francis I gave personal encouragement to one or more of these ventures. The French, therefore, were perhaps the first nation in Europe avowedly to send ships to the New World to trade; and in the course of trade to seize islands or make settlements on coasts which would protect their traders.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge of the success which was meeting this French venture soon spread across the Channel to the ports of southern and eastern England, and English adventurers were not long in following the French. [As will be seen afterwards, the two frequently made common cause against the Spaniard. Bad feeling and bitter rivalry between England and France did not really come into existence until the reign of Louis XIV and the closing years of the seventeenth century.] English ships had strayed south, to the vicinity of Trinidad and Venezuela in 1498, no doubt as the result of a fishing cruise round the banks of Newfoundland.

In 1507 Martin Walzmüller, a book printer at the little Lorraine university town of Saint-Dié, had proposed "America" as the name of the New World, and already, by about 1515, the idea of the great new continents beyond the Ocean "discovered by Americus" was being popularized amongst the reading public of Oxford, London, and Bristol. In 1516, apparently, a voyage was made from

<sup>1</sup> French attempts to break through the Spanish monopoly of access to the New World were at first sharply repressed by the Spaniards, and after the destruction of the French colony founded in northern Florida ("Arx Carolina") in 1565, and the murder of the French Huguenot settlers by the bloodthirsty Spaniard who had them at his mercy, the continents and islands of the New World remained for a little time longer the exclusive property of Spain and Portugal. But as early as 1542 the French fleet had attacked and plundered Cartagena, on the Colombian coast; in 1555 had held Havana, the capital of Cuba, for a month; and in 1558-67 had founded settlements on the coast of Brazil.

England by a certain Sir Thomas Pert, accompanied by the great Sebastian Cabot,<sup>1</sup> to examine the West Indies and the coasts of Brazil. Sir Thomas Pert was vice-admiral of England, and dwelt at Poplar, in what is now the east end of London. The ship, commanded by Pert, arrived at the Island of Hispaniola, and came to an anchor near the mouth of the harbour of Santo Domingo; but the request to be allowed to trade was met by a salvo of artillery from the governor of the fort. Whereupon the Englishmen withdrew themselves, and sailed towards the Island of Porto Rico, then called St. John's Island. Here they were better received, being even given provisions and some compensation for their harsh treatment at Santo Domingo. But nevertheless, through the faint heart of Sir Thomas Pert, any further voyage was discontinued, and the ship sailed back to England.

But earlier than the arrival of Frenchmen or Englishmen in the tropical regions of the New World came another element, which was to have a far-reaching effect on the history of America, and incidentally was to give much assistance to the piratical adventurers of France and England. This was the negro slave. In their hurry to get rich the Spaniards soon found that the Amerindians of the Greater Antilles and of Central America could not work hard and fast enough in mining for gold or in planting sugar cane. Moreover, the Amerindians had readily accepted Christianity, and had secured the championship of great missionary bishops, who pleaded their cause at the Court of Spain, and succeeded at last in relieving many of them from the status of slavery, so that as free Christians they could not be compelled to work against their will. As an alternative, therefore, to enslav-

<sup>1</sup> See *Pioneers in Canada*.

ing the Amerindians, the Spaniards decided to introduce negroes from Spain, southern Portugal, and north-west Africa. By 1502 the first negro slaves had been landed in the New World, and by the middle of the sixteenth century the demand for them had increased so much that the Spanish Government even permitted the English ships of Sir John Hawkins to trade between West Africa and the Greater Antilles with cargoes of negroes. This was between 1562 and 1567; and the grudging admittance of English vessels into the Gulf of Mexico, as smugglers not too strictly punished, was to lead to far-reaching results. For the English navigators brought back stories of the many valuable products<sup>1</sup> of the West Indies and the Spanish Main, of the rapid growth and great wealth of Spanish cities in these favoured regions, and of the hostility borne towards the Spaniards, not only by the native Amerindians, but also by many escaped negro slaves who had taken to the mountains, and for that reason were known to the Spaniards as *Cimarrones*, or "Dwellers on the Peaks".<sup>2</sup> [These *Cimarrones* soon drew a distinction between the French and English on the one hand and the Spaniards on the other, and whenever they fell in with the former were ready to help them against the Spaniard.]

SIR JOHN HAWKINS, as a young man, had probably sailed ships to the coasts of France and Portugal and to the Mediterranean. There he must have become acquainted with the trade which was carried on between Portugal and

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins gave an interesting description of potatoes bought off the coast of Venezuela in 1565. "These potatoes be the most delicate roots that may be eaten, and do far exceed our parsnips and carrots." He describes a pineapple as having a rind soft like that of a cucumber, and the inside being more delicious than any sweet apple sugared.

<sup>2</sup> From the Spanish word *Cima* = a peak. *Cimarron* was corrupted by the English adventurers into *Symeron*, and finally *Maroon*, a name for wild, "bush" negroes in America, which remains in our vocabulary.

the west coast of Africa. He also heard of the great need for negro labourers in the new lands which were being opened up by the Spaniards. The purveyance of these negroes was a State monopoly, probably at that time in the hands of Flemish or Dutch concessionaires. But the ships which engaged in this trade were few, and from some cause or other (partly, no doubt, the discouragement of the slave traffic which then seemed to be part of the Spanish policy) the demand for negroes was considerable and the supply very scanty. Hawkins, therefore, boldly sailed to the Guinea coast, eluding the jealous Portuguese; obtained by force, fraud, and barter, a supply of negro slaves, and with them passed over to the Island of Hispaniola, where he disposed of them at a great profit, though he was really smuggling. After this good fortune he actually sent his two ships to Seville, possibly to try and obtain a share of the carrying trade to the New World; but his vessels were seized and confiscated. But Queen Elizabeth lent him one of her own ships, which, ironically enough, was called the *Jesus*, and with this he went to the Guinea coast, obtained more slaves, and sold them to the Spanish settlers in the West Indies, despite the opposition offered by the authorities. He was afterwards knighted, and granted a coat of arms. As a crest he adopted the device of the bust of a negro in chains.

On his third voyage, in 1567, he pushed as far westwards as the mainland of Mexico, and entered the port of Vera Cruz. On his way thither he captured a small Spanish ship purposely, and held the Spaniards as hostages for his good treatment when he should reach the Spanish mainland. Consequently at Vera Cruz he was allowed to enter the harbour and to anchor off the Island of San Juan de Ulloa. His little force was made the

stronger because he had induced a French pirate to make common cause with him. But whilst he was repairing and refitting his ships there suddenly arrived a large Spanish squadron, which attacked him when he was off his guard, and destroyed the French pirate ship. Only two of the vessels of Hawkins's small squadron escaped, he being himself on one of them; and these tiny ships, insufficiently manned by dejected men, made a miserable voyage back across the Atlantic to Plymouth. On this 1567 voyage John Hawkins<sup>1</sup> was accompanied by his cousin, the noteworthy FRANCIS DRAKE.

Drake, who, like Hawkins, was born in Devonshire, was more or less brought up in Kent, where his father had become a clergyman in the Church of England and a kind of naval chaplain. Through the influence of his cousin, no doubt, he went to sea when he was about fifteen years old. By eighteen he had become purser or clerk to a Plymouth ship which traded with the north coast of Spain. When he was twenty years old he made a voyage to Guinea, possibly with his cousin, Hawkins; but he seems from Guinea to have gone out to the West Indies (no doubt with slaves to sell) as mate with a Captain Lovell. In 1567, however, he was appointed master of a small ship, the *Judith*, in the fleet which John Hawkins brought to anchor off Vera Cruz. In the overwhelming attack made by the Spaniards, at the beginning of 1568, on Hawkins's fleet off the island of Ulloa, Drake apparently made his escape at all costs, even to the abandonment of

<sup>1</sup> Hawkins was knighted in 1588, after serving against the Spanish Armada, but between 1565 and 1595 he made no other attempt to explore the waters of the New World. In 1595, however, he decided to accompany his cousin, Francis Drake, on a predatory voyage to the West Indies. This ended in complete failure, however, and Hawkins, having contracted a fever, died on his ship off Porto Rico in November, 1595.

his cousin. However, the two ships joined each other again on the home journey across the Atlantic. Two years afterwards, having obtained a privateering commission from Queen Elizabeth, he returned to the West Indies and plundered with some success. His excuse for attacking defenceless Spaniards was that he had suffered great losses in his voyages of 1565, 1566, and 1567-8.

In the year 1572 he apparently sailed direct from England to Nombre de Dios, a colony established by Columbus in the bay of Porto Bello, on the north coast of the Isthmus of Panamá. On this occasion he had two ships, one called the *Pasha* and the other the *Swan*. Having taken this place and plundered it, he then boldly crossed the Isthmus of Panamá with a number of his men and plundered the Spanish shipping in the river mouths and creeks of the Pacific coast. The Pacific Ocean he had already seen from a tree which he had climbed on the summit of a hill, and the tremendous importance of this discovery (apparently he had either not heard of or had not realized the fact that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were so near each other in this part of America) at once leapt to his mind. He then resolved that before long he would, in an English ship, be navigating what he styled the "South Atlantic Ocean": for, as the Isthmus of Panamá runs almost east and west in general direction it always seemed to the voyagers of those days that the Atlantic was the northern and the Pacific the southern ocean. He was helped in this daring enterprise by a number of revolted negro slaves, who, as already explained, bore the name of *Cimarrones*, from their having taken refuge on the high peaks.

Returning to his ships at Porto Bello he then sailed across to the rich and beautiful town of Cartagena on the

## 106      Pioneers in Tropical America

Colombia coast, and, having snatched what plunder he could here, he returned laden with wealth to England in 1673.

One of the officers who served with Drake on this voyage, JOHN OXENHAM (or Oxnam), of Plymouth, resolved to forestall Drake in his purpose of being the first English commander to navigate the great "Southern Ocean". He is believed to have left England early in 1575 in a ship of 140 tons with seventy men. He made for Nombre de Dios and entered into relations with the runaway Maroon negroes. Hearing from them that the gold and silver coming from Panamá to Nombre de Dios on the backs of mules was now escorted by a band of soldiers, he determined to do what "no man before enterprised". Landing at the place where Francis Drake had had his conference with the negroes, he covered his ship (which he dragged as much as possible on shore) with boughs of trees, hid his cannon in the ground, and so, not leaving any man behind, took two pieces of artillery and some calivers (or guns which could be carried on the shoulders), and a good store of provisions. Thus equipped he went with the negroes about 36 miles inland till he reached a river that flowed towards the Pacific Ocean. Here he cut wood and made a pinnace, which was 45 feet long by the keel. And in this pinnace he rowed and sailed down the river into the Pacific Ocean, taking six negroes with him as guides.

In this way he reached the Island of Pearls, which was about 75 miles from Panamá, and along the route which was followed by the Spanish ships proceeding from Peru to Panamá. On this island he concealed himself, his crew, and his boat, lying in wait to attack the Spanish ships. At last there came a small bark sailing from the

coast of Ecuador. This he took, and found in her 6000 dollars' worth of gold and much provisions. But, not contenting himself with this prize, he stayed still on the island, and at the end of six days he took another bark sailing from Lima, which contained 100,000 dollars' worth of silver in bars. He then visited the Pearl Islands to see if he could find pearls, and after obtaining a few he returned once more to his pinnace and abandoned his two prizes, sailing away to the river whence he had come, with the enormous plunder he had obtained in gold and silver.

But the negroes who dwelt on the Pearl Islands went in canoes to Panamá and told the governor what had occurred. The governor, or rather president of council, in this Spanish city forthwith sent four barks, each containing twenty-five soldiers, with negroes to row them. The captain of the expedition was Juan de Ortega. Obtaining intelligence from the Island of Pearls of the direction taken by Oxenham in his pinnace, Ortega proceeded to the mouth of the river; but there was puzzled which course to take with his four barks, because there were apparently three branches of the stream. However, choosing the broadest of the three, he saw, coming down a smaller tributary, many fowls' feathers, obviously derived from chickens which the English had plucked before roasting. Helped by this indication, he went up the smaller river, and at last, after four days, descried Oxenham's pinnace upon the sands. There were only six Englishmen with her at that moment, whereof the Spaniards killed one; but the other five escaped. And when the pinnace was seized, the Spaniards, to their disappointment, found her to contain nothing but provisions. Nevertheless, Juan de Ortega and his soldiers determined to seek the Englishmen on



land, and leaving twenty men to look after their boats, they went, eighty strong, up country. Before they had travelled a mile and a half they found a house made of boughs, in which were stored the goods of Oxenham's party and the gold and silver they had captured. Contented with this, Ortega conveyed the treasure back to his boats and renounced any further attempt to follow the English pirates.

But at the end of three days Oxenham came back to the riverside with his men and above 200 negroes, and set upon the Spaniards with great fury. Nevertheless the Spaniards sheltered themselves behind trees, and thus in the end prevailed; for they killed eleven Englishmen and five negroes, besides taking seven English prisoners. In this action they lost only two of their own men. The Spaniards enquired of their prisoners why, in the fifteen days which had elapsed since they had quitted the Pearl Islands, they had not made off far beyond any pursuit. They replied that their captain had commanded them to carry all the gold and silver which they had to the place where their ship had been left, and that they had promised to do this, even though they made four journeys backwards and forwards across the isthmus; for Oxenham had sworn that a share of the plunder should be paid to every man. Yet apparently some mistrust of Oxenham's good faith was felt, and a mutinous feeling had shown itself amongst the English seamen. Consequently Oxenham in his anger had engaged 200 negroes to carry the treasure. The five English seamen who had been left to guard the pinnace, and who had escaped from the first attack of the Spaniards, had told Oxenham how the house of boughs in the wood had been destroyed and the treasure taken away. Whereupon Oxenham had patched up a peace with his mutinous

crew and secured help from the Maroon negroes, who arrived with their bows and arrows, though the whole party subsequently met with the defeat already described.

Ortega, having buried the dead bodies and got all the things into his four boats, took the English captives and their pinnace back with him to Panamá. Advice was then sent to Nombre de Dios, and the commander of that place dispatched four vessels to seek everywhere for the English ship, which at length was found, dragged off the beach, and brought to Nombre de Dios. The Viceroy of Peru then thinking it very unsafe for the Spaniards if Oxenham and fifty Englishmen should remain at large on the Isthmus of Panamá, sent out one of his officers with 150 soldiers into the mountains of Darien to look for them. The unhappy Englishmen were discovered endeavouring to make canoes out of the big trees of the forest with which to take to the sea, and perhaps afterwards be able to capture some Spanish ship in the Atlantic and so sail home. The Spanish force surrounded them. Some were sick and were captured, and the rest broke through the Spanish soldiers and fled with the negroes; who, however, tired of this long struggle, and afraid of the Spaniards, betrayed them, so that Oxenham and all his comrades were at last brought to Panamá.

Here the judge of the place asked Oxenham to show him the Queen's license, or a commission from some other prince or lord, to justify his making war on Spanish ships. Oxenham answered that he had none. Therefore he and all his company were condemned to die as pirates. Most of them were executed then and there, at Panamá, but Oxenham and two other officers of the ship were sent to Lima to be beheaded. Of the whole crew only five boys were spared. Three hundred Spanish soldiers went forth

to deal out condign punishments to the settlements of Maroon negroes on the north side of Darien, and many of these runaway slaves were either killed or captured. But after a while the Maroons grew wise and wary, and dodged these pursuits and attacks, while a raging hatred grew up amongst them against the Spaniards. This feeling was of material assistance afterwards, for a hundred years or more, to English, French, and Dutch freebooters who attempted to break through the Spanish monopoly of Central America.

Meanwhile, Francis Drake, having obtained an introduction to Queen Elizabeth on his return in 1573, eventually received from her a commission to embark on the daring voyage of exploration over the great Southern Ocean, which he had cherished and prepared for in his thoughts since he set eyes on the vast expanse of water in 1572. But, mindful of Oxenham's attempt to forestall him, he kept his plans and his route as secret as possible, so as to find no rivals preceding him in this great adventure, and arousing all the vigilance and wrath of Spain. The fleet of which he was placed in command consisted of five ships manned with 164 officers and men. The largest of the ships was the *Pelican*, in which "the Admiral and Captain-General", Francis Drake, himself sailed. The *Pelican*, afterwards renamed the *Golden Hinde*, was 100 tons in burden, that is to say, equivalent in size to a small schooner yacht at the present day. The other ships were the *Elizabeth*, the *Marigold*, the *Swan*, and the *Christopher*. The *Marigold* was only 30 tons, the *Christopher* 15. Just imagine what it meant sailing from Plymouth to South America in a pinnace—a tiny sailing vessel of 15 tons capacity! Drake also took with him the material for putting together other pinnaces, if he should get into a

region of smooth water and want a fleet of attendant vessels. Neither did he forget to make provision also for ornament and delight, carrying for this purpose with him expert musicians, rich furniture—the vessels for use at his table, and even belonging to the cook's galley, being of pure silver!—and “divers shows of all sorts of curious workmanship”, so as to display the civilization and magnificence of his native country amongst all nations.

From Plymouth Drake's ships sailed to the coast of Morocco, and the fleet fetched up off the island and port of Mogador. Apparently there was no Moorish city there in those days, for the country round this good harbour was uninhabited and consisted of sandy dunes all overgrown with shrubs breast-high, like privet in appearance. This scrub country harboured multitudes of “pigeons” (probably sand grouse), and the pigeons were pursued by goshawks. Before long their presence here was perceived by the Moors, who sent off a deputation to see if the ships were in any way connected with Portugal. The Portuguese attempted to hold Mogador by means of a fort, but the Moorish King of Fez had destroyed the fort and driven the Portuguese away. Having made use of his stay at Mogador to construct a new pinnace, Drake sailed on with his fleet to Cape Blanco, capturing some poor Spanish fishermen on the way, and from Cape Blanco reached the archipelago of the Cape Verde Islands. Here he noted coconut palms growing, together with cultivated bananas. These must have been already introduced by the Portuguese.

Drake in his account of the voyage comments on the abundance of salt lying in huge snow-like drifts above high-water mark, “most fine and perfect in nature”, the salt being derived from sea water by evaporation in shallow

depressions. He finds so much of value in the Cape Verde Islands that he considers "it a thing to be lamented that so sweet and profitable a land should be peopled by so ungracious a people as the Portuguese", and considers the archipelago should be inhabited "by a people fearing the Lord, to praise him for His benefits and to set forth His glory for the good of His people". From the Cape Verde Islands the fleet set sail after piratically capturing a Portuguese ship laden with wine, linen, and woollen cloth and other necessities, and bound for Brazil.

The Portuguese crew and passengers were taken out of the prize and placed instead in a new pinnace built at Mogador. They were provided with wine, bread, and fish, and put off so as to reach with ease the Island of Brava in the Cape Verde group. One of their number, Silvestre, or da Silva, was retained as a pilot, being willing to show Drake the way into the South Sea through the Straits of Magellan. It is important to note this, because in most of the accounts of Drake's voyages it is assumed that he found his way through the Straits of Magellan by his own cleverness.

For thirty-four days Drake's ships sailed across the Atlantic in a south-westerly direction. Sometimes they had thunderstorms and short squalls, but for the most part their voyage across the tropical Atlantic was a delightful experience, "as if we had been in a garden of pleasure", wrote Drake. These storms gave them enough rain to keep up their supply of fresh water, while the splendid sunshine cured the sailors and soldiers of many ship maladies, amongst other (as is related with great detail) a plague of lice, which had grown almost intolerable. This plague of vermin on the men's bodies and in the clothes was due to the filthy habits prevailing

among all Englishmen and most Christian Europeans down to the nineteenth century. The sea, however, furnished the ships' crews with an abundant fish diet; especially in the form of flying-fish, which fell in numbers on the decks in their mad flight before the attacks of the "dolphin" or bonito fish. These last, too, in pursuing the flying-fish, came so close to the ships that they were frequently speared and lugged on board. Birds also, tired with their migratory voyages, settled on the rigging and decks of the ships and allowed themselves to be taken by the hand, soon afterwards to be popped into the seamen's cooking pots.

## CHAPTER V

### Drake on the Coasts of South America

WHEN the five ships under Drake's command neared the coast of Brazil in the beginning of April, 1578, a violent storm burst on them, preceded and succeeded by a haze or fog "like an Egyptian darkness". This storm led to a separation of the ships, which were not reunited until some time afterwards. But at last the whole fleet was safely anchored off Cape Joy (so named on account of their reassemblage), within the mouth of the great estuary of the Rio de la Plata, probably not far from the modern town of Monte Video. The country hereabout was "of a temperate and most sweet air",<sup>1</sup> very fair and pleasant to behold. Beside the exceeding fruitfulness of the soil, it was stored with plenty of beasts and birds. On an island off the isthmus of Rocky Bay, where they were at anchor, innumerable seals came to bask in the sun, and many of these were killed by Drake's men to provide both fresh and salt provisions, their flesh being very acceptable, tasting something like veal. On the rocks of this bay was growing a strange plant having but one leaf and a stem rising out of the middle of it, with the fruit on either side of the stem and round the edges of the leaf (probably a kind of cactus). The upper side of the leaf was covered with a whitish down or cotton

<sup>1</sup> From which cause the town and colony of Buenos Aires, or "good airs" were subsequently named by the Spaniards.

disguising poisonous spines, which worked their way through the clothing till they reached a man's skin. This they penetrated, raising red and fiery pimples by the poison in them and causing extreme itching and burning for some hours.

Fearing to get aground in the many shoals of the Rio de la Plata, Drake proceeded on his southern voyage with scarcely a halt (though he was occasionally near enough to the coast to see the tall Amerindian natives of Patagonia) till he reached a point somewhere about Puerto Deseado, where he was obliged to anchor owing to the many and grievous storms and thick fogs, which greatly hampered their voyage and led to the separation of three of the ships from the rest of the fleet. The Amerindians of this region at first displayed friendly intentions, but then took fright at the sight of the ships and ran away into the interior, leaving behind most of their provisions. Amongst these were the carcasses of about fifty rheas<sup>1</sup> which had been dried for keeping. The thighs of these birds were compared by Drake to "reasonable legs of mutton" in size. He describes how the natives managed to approach and kill the rheas, much after the style of the Bushmen in South Africa, by fitting out the neck and plumes of a dead rhea with a framework of sticks and stalking the rheas under this disguise, driving them into some place enclosed with strong and long nets, and then sending out their trained dogs to pull them down. Drake

<sup>1</sup> The Rhea or American Ostrich is a distant relation of the Old-World ostrich of Africa and western Asia; that is to say, it belongs to an allied family or sub-order of the sub-class of struthious birds with flat breastbones and terrestrial, flightless habits. Rheas have, however, very large wings, but the plume feathers, which represent the degenerate quills, are not strong enough to strike the air with any force. The expanded wings are used sometimes like sails to aid progress in running. There are three species of Rhea in South America: one in north-east Brazil; the other two in south Brazil, Paraguay, and Patagonia.



departed from this harbour on 15 May, 1578, and found a bay in  $47^{\circ} 30'$ , which was fair, safe, and beneficial to their crews.

From this resting place he sent out Captain Winter in the *Elizabeth* to search for the missing vessels to the south-west, whilst he sailed northwards and thus met with the little *Swan*, which with great joy he brought back to the port (? Bear Bay) where the rest of the fleet lay at anchor. In this bay there was an island connected with the mainland at low water. Hither came many natives, leaping, dancing, holding up their hands, and apparently inviting the Europeans to come and see them. A boat was sent out with tempting trade goods. But the savages for some time held off from direct intercourse until after consulting their deities, to be quite sure that the White men would do them no harm.

These Patagonians, though tall, were found to be not such wonderful giants as the exaggerated description of the first Spanish explorers had declared them. The women had their heads always close shaven with a razor made of flint, whereas the men wore their hair as long as it would grow; so much so that it frequently reached down to below the hips. For the most part, however, the men bound up their hair with laces made of rhea feathers until it was erected into a huge bunch or chignon on the top of the head, and this they used as a hiding place for their valuables, a sheath for their arrows and knives, a case for their toothpicks, and a place in which they could store their sticks for making fire. The men also bored holes through the septum of the nostrils, and through the lower lip, and thrust into these holes finely polished pegs of wood or bone 3 or 4 inches long. Sometimes these were worn in the shape of a cross so as to

make them seem terrible. For the rest, they were clean and comely in person. Except for a furry pelt of deer, guanaco, or puma, cast about their shoulders to protect them from cold or damp (a covering they sometimes fastened round their loins), they went naked; but their body and skin were treated with the greatest care. From babyhood the body was rubbed with the melted fat of rheas, mixed with chalk or sulphur. This was rubbed into the skin when the body was warm with the heat of a fire. This being oiled, the skin closed its pores and the body was less sensitive to severe cold. In addition to this treatment the natives in warmer weather painted their skins with the juices of plants or with some mineral like sulphur, or black with charcoal and white with chalk. Sometimes the whole body was painted black, except the neck, which was white. Others would paint one shoulder black and another white, one side of the body white and the other black, and perhaps pick out the black part with white moons and the white part with black suns. Drake supposed that they worshipped especially the sun and the moon, and decorated their bodies with these signs in consequence. The men were armed with short bows and abundance of arrows made of reeds and headed with flint stones. The string of their bows was slack and never bent, but with them they were able to send an arrow with terrible and deadly force. They made fire with two pieces of wood by means of the friction of a drill. They lived chiefly on meat—the flesh of seals and birds—and would cut pieces of six pounds or so in weight, throw them into the flames until they were a little scorched, then, taking them out, tear them in pieces with their teeth. These big Patagonians were passionately fond of dancing and music, the music being chiefly derived

from rattles made out of the bark of trees, sewn up with the gut of the rhea and enclosing little stones. To the rattling of these bark instruments they would dance themselves almost into a state of frenzy.

Apparently they had no canoes or boats, and were therefore unable to reach the small islands off the shore, contenting themselves with killing such seals as they could find on the shore line. Consequently the islands were the resort of myriads of sea fowl, which could nest there undisturbed by man. Drake's men went to one of these islands and found it "a storehouse of victuals for a king's army"; for such was the infinite abundance of eggs and birds, there was no footing on the ground without treading on one or the other. The birds were so thickly placed and so entirely fearless of man that they would not move out of the way until some of them were killed with swords and cudgels to make a path through the mass. Even then, birds were arriving constantly from the sea which could find no room to perch, so that they began to settle on the head, shoulders, and arms of the seamen, some of whom actually fainted with the fatigue of killing or thrusting aside these large sea birds, which all the time deafened the men with their cries.

The Patagonians quickly made friendship with the English officers and seamen, "thinking themselves to be joined with such a people as they ought rather to serve than offer any wrong or injury unto". They looked upon Drake as a father and on his men as brothers.

When Drake had recovered all his ships he entered Port St. Julian with the fleet. The Patagonians at this place took especial delight in seeing the feats of archery in which the English of that day (as in previous times) showed themselves such adepts. But more especially they

admired the skill of the master gunner, Oliver, and of Robert Winter, or Wintery. The last-named was able to shoot an arrow twice as far as any Patagonian. But these pleasant relations were unfortunately interrupted by the arrival of two old men, who seemed to view the English with great suspicion. On an occasion when Winter was going to give an exhibition of his skill in archery the string of his bow broke. Suddenly the dispositions of the Patagonians changed, partly under the inspiration of the two old men; and when the English party turned to go back to their boats, the Patagonians discharged arrows at them, especially aiming at Robert Winter, whom they shot with an arrow through the lungs; while Oliver, the master gunner, whose fowlingpiece would not take fire on account of the powder being damp, was shot through the heart. The whole of the English party might have been killed, had not Drake arranged those that had shields in front to cover such as had only swords or billhooks. Thus they stayed whilst the Patagonians shot at them fruitlessly till all their arrows but one was spent. When this came about, Drake took the fowlingpiece in hand, and, priming it anew, aimed at the man who had first begun the quarrel. The charge struck him in the stomach and disembowelled him. The poor wretch died in great torment, uttering cries as terrible "as if ten bulls had joined together in roaring", so that all his companions fled in horror, and the Englishmen reached their boat. Having seen to the manning of this, they returned to fetch their dead comrade, and found him with an arrow thrust deep into one of his eyes and part of his clothing removed.

Robert Winter having died from his wounds, he and Oliver were given solemn burial in one grave. But a far greater danger than a skirmish with the natives now

menaced Drake's expedition—a threatened mutiny. Exactly what form this mutiny was to take is very uncertain from the meagre account of it given in the literature of the day, but it would seem as though a certain Thomas Doughty, an accomplished gentleman, who was one of the officers of the expedition, “well versed in Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew”, and whose religious life attracted the attention of his comrades in the fleet, was held to be responsible for it. He was charged with conspiring to bring about a rising against Drake's authority, and if need be the assassination of Drake himself. It was said that Drake had been warned of Doughty's treachery before the expedition left Plymouth. Further troubles arose when Doughty was placed in charge of the Portuguese prize piratically captured off the Cape Verde Islands. He was alleged to have converted some of the property in the prize to his own uses, and so was removed from command of it and put into Drake's own ship, the *Pelican*. Here (it was stated) he had continued his treacherous actions, to the end that he might on some convenient occasion usurp Drake's authority.

Much of the mischief really seems to have originated through Francis Drake's brother, Thomas, who was a man of bad disposition, and was perpetually quarrelling with Doughty. A ridiculous quarrel, moreover, arose with a trumpeter named John Brewer. Doughty apparently sought out Francis Drake, who was on another ship, to explain this, but was refused an interview and at once ordered to get into one of the smallest vessels of the fleet and continue his journey in that. This was off the coast of Brazil. This “flyboat” subsequently parted company with the rest of the fleet—really owing to storms—and Drake inveighed against Doughty for his

“treachery”. But subsequently the flyboat rejoined her companions, Doughty in the interval having been very badly treated by its master. The unfortunate man was now put into the Portuguese prize again. Everything he did or said was twisted to his disadvantage, by Francis Drake especially, though Drake continued to protest that he was at heart his friend “as ever was Pythias to Damon”.

At last, in Port St. Julian, after the mishap with the Patagonians already related, Doughty was brought to trial by Drake and charged with mutinous intentions. Whenever Doughty attempted to defend himself, Drake raved at him, saying that his life was not safe in Doughty’s presence, and commanding his friends to bind him; after which Drake continued to insult him. Master John Winter was foreman of the jury that tried Doughty. Friends of Doughty protested against the iniquity of this trial, but Drake bore them down, saying he cared nothing for the law. The jury, being frightened by Drake, brought in a verdict of guilty. Doughty, asked as to what fate he preferred, requested to be taken as far as Peru and set on shore. Drake replied he would do this if he had any security for his own life whilst Doughty remained on board. Master John Winter proffered himself as such security. Then Drake (who was resolved on Doughty’s death) met this with the objection that in such a case Doughty must “be nailed close under the hatches, and the whole expedition must return to England as a company of desperate bankrupts”. This alternative so distressed those who stood by that they implored Drake on the contrary to put Doughty to death.

The unfortunate Doughty then for two days put his affairs in order and spent his time in prayer, distributing

most of his goods amongst his friends and receiving the Sacrament. Drake, with the monstrous hypocrisy which was not rare in those times, actually offered to accompany the man he was about to murder judicially to the Lord's Table, and further offered him the choice of the death by which he would die. Doughty chose beheadal. This extraordinary couple then received the Lord's Sacrament together, and even took part in a banquet afterwards—a "banquet such as the place might yield". Doughty then had a little private conversation with Drake, and the couple, together with a number of men armed with bills and staves, marched to the place of execution, where Doughty showed himself "no less valiant than all the time before". Here, kneeling down, not far from the actual gibbet on which Magellan had caused to be hanged the men whom he had charged with mutiny fifty-eight<sup>1</sup> years before, he prayed for the Queen of England and for the happy success of Drake's voyage. Then, asking forgiveness of his companions, mentioning some of them by name who had been specially venomous in their quarrels with him, Doughty embraced the cruel Drake and laid his head upon the block. The executioner with one blow severed the head from the body, upon which Drake "most despitefully" caused the head to be taken up and shown to the whole company, saying as this was done: "Lo, this is the end of traitors". For several days afterwards Drake conducted himself more or less fantastically, assembling the men on shore, offering those that were discontented a free passage back to England in the *Marigold*, and then daring them to accept, adding that

<sup>1</sup> This extraordinary coincidence, of course, was noted by everyone at the time. For an account of this former "mutiny" at Port St. Julian see my account of Magellan's voyage in *Pioneers in Australasia*.

he would pursue them and bring them back. At another time he threatened to hang thirty of the crew for being as bad as Doughty, and later called on them to forget old quarrels and join him in bringing the voyage to a successful conclusion, whereupon he would reward them richly out of his own funds. On other occasions he would make the most indiscreet and boasting revelations of his secret financial and political agreements with Queen Elizabeth; and all this conversation was interspersed with frequent oaths—"By God's life!" "By God's wounds!" &c. The stay at Port St. Julian was about two months long, and in this protracted delay the food supplies of the men began to run short. They were obliged to eat seaweed, mussels, and cockles. Fortunately these last were each about a pound in weight.

On 20 August, 1578, the expedition came in sight of the opening of the Straits of Magellan at Cape Virgenes, or, as it was then called by the Spaniards, Virgen Maria (it has the double name of Cape Dungeness). This promontory is in sight some 12 miles before a ship is alongside. It has high, steep, grey cliffs, full of black scars, against which the sea beats with tremendous cascades of foam. Rounding this point, Drake, in his happiness, caused the fleet to give a special salute to the queen's majesty by striking their topsails, and "in remembrance of his honourable friend and favourer, Sir Christopher Hatton", he then and there changed the name of his own ship, the *Pelican*, to that of the *Golden Hinde*.<sup>1</sup>

The waters of Magellan's Straits are a maze of possible channels, and it can be easily understood how these early navigators were puzzled and deceived by the openings and broad creeks which would seem to be pas-

<sup>1</sup> Apparently this was the device or crest of Sir Christopher Hatton.



sages into the open sea, but which turned out to be landlocked gulfs, and peninsulas at first seeming like islands. Drake's men, however, soon realized that the regions lying to the south of the straits were no great Antarctic continent, but simply a collection of islands beyond which, to the south, lay a great ocean. They noticed an island in the eastern part of the straits which was apparently an active volcano, rising high into the heavens and discharging flames and smoke. On the shores of the straits and on the islands they observed great numbers of penguins. Some of these had on their heads upright tufts of feathers, like the crest of a peacock, and red circles about their eyes, "which became them well". Of these penguins in one day they killed no less than *three thousand*, as they considered them "a very good and wholesome victual". The little fleet of English vessels met with many difficulties in its passage of Magellan's Straits owing to the violent and contrary winds. The mountains of Tierra del Fuego on the south, and of Brunswick Peninsula (as it was afterwards called) on the north, were high (in some cases over 6000 feet), and from the clefts in their snow peaks rushed down violent winds, blowing from all the directions of the compass, and sometimes meeting where the ship was in one tremendous whirling hurricane that seemed to dig, as it were, into the sea water and raise it up on the rocky coasts into tremendous cascades, which fell again in a salt rain. The sea, moreover, was so deep that it was impossible to anchor out in the open strait. The men were scared by the grisly sight of the frozen mountains covered with ice and snow, and they were chilled to the very marrow with the cold. Yet at the base of the mountains there would be sweet pastures and dense forests, even though the trees were sometimes crushed with the

weight of ice from the frozen snow and rain which fell upon them. The people who inhabited these groves and plains of sweet pasture (in which were many valuable and aromatic herbs) were comely and harmless, and went stark naked. They built miserable huts of boughs "like arbours in English gardens". These huts were sometimes roofed with sealskins. Their implements and utensils were buckets for holding water, drinking cups, and boxes (all made of bark sewn together with thread obtained from the sinews or guts of the guanaco and the wolf), axes and knives made of big mussel shells ground to a fine edge and very sharp, and canoes, also made of bark. The canoes were sometimes of fine proportion, provided with a raised stern and a raised bow, and accommodating quite a number of passengers. These Amerindians painted their bodies with divers colours, and carried about with them bark boxes of painting materials. The men decorated themselves with red circles about their eyes and bands of red on their foreheads. The women wore chains of white shells upon their arms and necks.

On 6 September, 1578, the ships emerged into the Pacific Ocean, not by the direct route of Barbara Channel, but by the longer, straighter course followed by Magellan himself, which would bring them out near Queen Adelaide archipelago in about south latitude  $52^{\circ} 30'$ . Here Drake had intended to stop and to erect a memorial to Queen Elizabeth, engraved in metal, on the sea cape of Desolation Island, but there was no safe anchorage, and the wind was beginning to rise. Two days afterwards, as they were attempting to struggle northwards up the Pacific coast, along the immense archipelago of islands which extends from Chiloe in  $42^{\circ}$  N. lat. to Tierra del Fuego in  $54^{\circ} 30'$ , their fleet was suddenly stricken with a tempest of the most

terrible nature, which seemed likely to overwhelm and destroy the whole expedition. The sky was darkened for *fifty-six* days, so that they saw neither sun nor stars, and only once did they catch sight of the moon for a quarter of an hour, during which, as it so happened, that planet was partially eclipsed! This appalling storm blew the ships southwards and overwhelmed the barque *Marigold*, with her captain and her crew of twenty-eight mariners, who were swallowed up by the mountainous waves, though their cries as the ship was struck and swamped even rose above the clamour of the tempest. Again and again it seemed as though the *Pelican* must be dashed to pieces on the craggy rocks and mountainous cliffs, towards which she was continually driven by the wind and carried on the mountainous billows of the sea. "Such was the malice of the mountains that they seemed to agree together in one consent and joined their forces to work our overthrow"—by the winds which they sent down from their icy peaks. In this miserable state the *Pelican* and some of her consorts were driven "as through the eye of a needle" into a great and large bay by a narrow passage between the rocks. Here, however, their cables broke, their anchors came home, and the ships were once more separated. The *Pelican* was again driven south by the winds till she must have reached about S. lat. 56°, from which point it became obvious to those on board that they were off the extremity of South America and that there was no great southern continent in this direction. Once again they steered to the north, and again were driven south. The *Elizabeth* at this period managed to re-enter the Straits of Magellan, and, thoroughly scared and disgusted with the experiences of the fifty-six days' storm, set sail for the eastwards, passed out into the Atlantic, and returned to England by the fol-

lowing June. The *Swan* had disappeared off the coast of Patagonia some months previously, the *Christopher* and the Portuguese prize had been abandoned at Port Julian, and the *Marigold* had foundered; so that Drake was left with only one ship, the *Pelican*—re-named the *Golden Hinde*.

After losing sight of the *Elizabeth* the *Pelican* was blown back again to the islands off the southern extremity of Tierra del Fuego. Here the crew rested for two days with some quietness, finding "divers good and wholesome herbs and pleasant-tasting berries", together with fresh water, so that the men by making infusions of these herbs recovered health and strength. Yet again the violent weather returned. The winds were such as if all had been set at liberty. "The seas were rolled up from the depths, even from the roots of the rocks", and were carried aloft like feathers or drifts of snow, so that the sea water sprinkled the mountain sides. Anchors ceased to hold. The ship was tossed about like a plaything, and was again driven southwards, so that it must have reached the vicinity of Cape Horn, where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans met "in a most large and free scope".

At last, at the end of October, the storms ceased abruptly and calm weather set in, during which the *Golden Hinde* made her way north-westwards without incident, passed the great archipelago of islands (stopping once to renew the supply of penguins), till they reached an islet called Mocha, which lay off the coast of Arauco, a region of Chile. This islet for some reason Drake took to be a large island. His ship's crew found Mocha to be a fruitful place well stored with good things, such as sheep and cattle, maize, potatoes, and other roots. In the description, the islet, which was of very small size, was evidently confused

with the opposite mainland, and especially the country of Valdivia to the south. Rowing in a boat from Mocha to the mainland, Drake and his companions were received by the Amerindian natives with a great show of friendship. These people had with them fat sheep,<sup>1</sup> fowls, and maize, and promised that if the Englishmen came next morning at the rising of the sun they could trade in such desirable products.

All that night the men on the *Golden Hinde* could scarcely sleep for thinking of the delicious mutton and fowls they were about to eat the next day, and Drake the next morning started for the mainland with a joyful crew, well armed with swords and shields, and fearing no perils. But they were only being lured to their destruction, for they no sooner entered a narrow creek indicated to them as the place for landing, than amongst the high reeds and rushes of the shore were concealed a number of warriors armed with bows and arrows and darts. When the sailors got out of the boat to fill their vessels with fresh water, they were set upon by the natives at such close quarters that their bodies became simply targets to receive the Indian arrows. Not one person of the boat's crew escaped without some grievous wound, one man having as many as twenty-one arrows in his body. Drake himself was wounded in the head and face. They would not have escaped with their lives had not a seaman, regarded hitherto "as rather a simple fellow", cut the rope which detained the boat with his sword, so that they were able to push her off and row away for dear life, the arrows coming after them "as thick as gnats in the sun"; indeed, the sides of the

<sup>1</sup> Originally obtained, of course, from the Spaniards in Peru, for domestic sheep were unknown to the natives of America before the coming of Europeans.

boat were stuck with arrows "like the quills of a porcupine".

It so happened that only one man died of his wounds. Unfortunately, however, when they reached the ship they discovered that two of their companions had been left on shore. A party of men therefore from the *Golden Hinde* rowed back to the mainland with guns. They came close enough to see about 2000 Indians armed with bows, darts, spears, pikes, and other weapons, some of them headed with pure silver, which in the light of the sun made a wonderful show and glittering. In the middle of a semicircle of these warriors lay the two unfortunate Englishmen, dying in torment. As far as their countrymen in the boat could distinguish, they were tied down to the ground whilst the Indians danced round them, singing loudly as they did so. Ever and again some savage would dart forward with a knife, cut a piece of flesh away from the unfortunate bound men and throw it into the air. This would be caught by one or other of the dancers, who, with his companions, would then devour it raw. So they went on until the flesh was cut from the bones of their prisoners. The men in the boat fired volleys of shot, but without doing any harm to their enemies, for as soon as the guns went off the Indians threw themselves on the ground, and then once more rose and returned to their horrible sport. Much more execution could have been done, no doubt, if they had brought the ship nearer and fired at the savages with cannon; but Drake refused to do this, alleging that the natives were only revenging on the English the maltreatment they had suffered at the hands of the Spaniards, the more so because on their first intercourse several of the English sailors had foolishly spoken to the natives in Spanish.

Sailing north from this place of disaster the *Golden Hinde* entered the Bay of San Felipe. Here they captured an Indian fishing in a canoe, "a comely personage and of goodly stature, clothed in a white garment reaching scarcely to his knees, the hair upon his head very long. He was without a beard, as all the Indians for the most part are. He seemed very gentle, of mild and humble nature, and most grateful for the presents bestowed upon him." This man eventually procured for them a few provisions from his friends, and a pilot to show the way to a good harbour lying to the south—none other than Valparaiso. Already there had been founded the important town of Santiago de Chile at some distance inland. The narrative of the voyage does not say why the Spaniards of Valparaiso apparently received Drake with much kindness and courtesy, or whether they were compelled to do so by dread of these desperate English sailors. In any case they found there great stores of wine, bread, bacon, and other provisions. In the harbour was a Spanish ship loading up with these and other goods, which was apparently destined to proceed to the Solomon Islands. Amongst other treasures the place possessed a quantity of fine gold from Valdivia, and a great crucifix of gold studded with emeralds and with the figure of Christ cut out of the same precious stone.

Sailing northward from Valparaiso, and giving up as hopeless any chance of meeting with the missing *Elizabeth*, Drake entered a small bay called Cippo (probably just north of the town of La Serena). Here, having landed fourteen men to seek for supplies, the party was immediately descried by 100 Spaniards riding on horses and followed by 200 miserable-looking Indians, who ran like dogs at their heels, "naked and in miserable bond-

age". All the Englishmen, except one, escaped. This one, being over bold and careless of his own safety, sought to cover the retreat of his friends by facing the Spaniards. He was killed, no doubt by an arrow, and his dead body, having been drawn from out of the waves by the Indians, was forthwith beheaded by the Spaniards, who further severed his right hand and cut out his heart, leaving the rest of the poor body to be devoured by the fowls of the air. [The next morning the Englishmen landed and buried it.] In this Bay of Cippo (after a fruitless search for the *Elizabeth*, which of course had long since set out on her return to England) the officers and crew of the *Golden Hinde* devoted themselves to fishing in order to obtain a good food supply for their future operations. To them it seemed that no other place they had visited, except Cape Blanco on the West African coast, equalled this part of South America for abundance of sea fish. The officers of the ship would sometimes take in two hours, with a hook and line, as many as 400 fish (in appearance and taste very like a gurnard). After leaving Cippo Bay the search for fresh water became more and more difficult, for they were passing along the Atacama desert region. At Tarapacá they landed, and came upon a Spaniard who was lying fast asleep; and by his side were thirteen bars of silver, equivalent in weight and value to about 4000 Spanish ducats (or at the present day, £2000). Drake and his men promptly relieved him of this charge without scruple, for they were thoroughgoing pirates. Landing at another place farther up the coast, still seeking for water, they encountered a Spaniard with an Indian boy, driving before him eight "Peruvian sheep".<sup>1</sup> Each of these sheep carried two leather bags

<sup>1</sup>These "Peruvian sheep", much referred to subsequently by the historians of



on its back, and in each bag a fifty-pound weight of refined silver. "We could not endure to see a gentleman Spaniard turned carrier, so therefore without entreaty we offered our services and became drovers. Naturally his directions were not so perfect that we could keep the way which he intended. Almost as soon as he was parted from us we, with our new kind of carriages, were come unto our boats."

On the coast of this region of northern Chile, or rather, southern Peru, the Amerindians were found using rafts made of sealskins, resembling in form a boat, but supported on the level of the water by inflated bladders. These rafts or boats of hide were able to carry quite a considerable burden, chiefly cargoes of fish.

Anchoring off a native town of large population which was governed by two Spaniards, Drake coerced these people into trading with him, and bought from them tame llamas, whose resemblances to camels he could not help noting. They were so strong that they were able to carry on their backs at one time three well-grown, tall men and one boy. All this region of southern Peru—the province of Cusco—was at that time amazingly rich in silver. In many parts the ground yielded twenty-five shillings' worth of pure silver for each hundred pounds' weight of earth. On 7 February the town of Arica was reached, and the sight of its surroundings was a great relief after the long and monotonous stretch of desert, for it was situated at the mouth of a most

Drake's voyage, were of course the now well-known llama. The llama is the domesticated form of the guanaco, a South American beast of the Camel family. The Camel group of ruminants originated either in China or western North America, and the ancestors of the llama genus (*Auchenia*) spread during the Tertiary Epoch southwards into western South America, where they are represented at the present day by the large guanaco and the small vicuña. See p. 39.

pleasant and fertile valley abundant with all good things. It was by this time strongly garrisoned by Spaniards, and in its port was much Spanish shipping. But apparently Drake impudently plundered of their store of silver (in ingots, each about 20 pounds in weight) two of the biggest vessels in the harbour. Every other ship he had met on his way north from Lima was robbed similarly if it contained anything of value. At Lima, or more strictly speaking its seaport, Callao, the Englishmen found thirty ships assembled, whereof seventeen were really prepared for war. Drake therefore was constrained to keep the peace, but whilst at Callao he gathered all the information he could, not only as to the events which had occurred in Europe and the Mediterranean since his departure, but what likelihood there might be of his falling in with large Spanish ships with valuable cargoes. To encourage himself in this piratical course, and obtain from his readers in contemporary times approval of his disgraceful actions, he was obliged to lash himself into fury over the Pope and Roman Catholic doctrines, and to charge the Spaniards with every conceivable crime against God and man. He relates with horror how twelve persons, merely for preaching the Gospel, had been imprisoned and six of them burnt at Lima within the last few days of his arrival,<sup>1</sup> adding immediately afterwards: "Lastly, here we had intelligence of a certain rich ship which was loaded with gold and silver for Panamá that had set forth from this haven the 2nd of February". The very next day, therefore, in the morning (namely, 16 February, 1579) he set sail towards Panamá, making all the haste he could "to get sight if possible of that gallant ship,

<sup>1</sup>The corresponding hanging, beheading, and disembowelling alive of priests in England at the same period was of course left unnoticed.

the *Cacafuego*, the great glory of the South Sea, which was gone from Lima fourteen days before us". Off the coasts of northern Peru and Ecuador, the *Golden Hinde* arrested other Spanish ships, taking from one casks of wine, and from another gold and ship's tackle. And at last, off Cape Francisco, in Ecuador, they came up with the celebrated *Cacafuego*, the "Fire-spurter". They captured this vessel apparently with ease, and found in her fruit, sugar, meal, and many other provisions, a certain quantity of jewels and precious stones, thirteen chests full of silver dollars, 80 pounds weight of gold, 26 tons of uncoined silver, two very fair gilt-silver drinking bowls, "and the like trifles valued in all at about 360,000 pezos".<sup>1</sup> Drake gave to the master of the captured ship a little linen and some other necessities which he had taken from other Spanish ships, and at the end of six days left him to go his way to Panamá.

Laden with this rich cargo, Drake's one thought was to return as speedily as possible to England, but not by the southern route, in case the Spaniards' ships should assemble to take their revenge. He therefore thought that he would sail up the west coast of North America, and perhaps find there some strait across the continent equivalent to Magellan's Straits in the south. Somewhere off the coast of Western Panamá (probably the Azuero Peninsula) they found a convenient island at the mouth of a river, where they decided to stay and rest for a while and obtain fresh water. Whilst abiding in this sheltered place between the "Island of Canes" and the mainland they experienced a terrible earthquake, the force of which was

<sup>1</sup>The peso or dollar was nominally worth, about that time, 4s. 2d., so this cargo would have been worth a little over £72,000 in our money, equivalent in purchasing power at that time to £200,000.

such that the ship and its pinnace were shaken as if they were laid on dry land. Nevertheless, when this terror was passed, they had reason to congratulate themselves on their choice of a resting place, for they found here abundance of fish, fresh water, and firewood, "besides monkeys and alargartoes" (alligators, really caimans, see p. 40).

On their way across the Gulf of Panamá they had captured and plundered one more Spanish ship from China sailing to Peru. She was laden with linen, silks, and porcelain, and amongst other valuable things contained a falcon of wrought gold with a great emerald set in its breast. From the Island of Canes, off the Panamá Isthmus, they sailed, without stopping at any port, until they reached Huatulco on the southern coast of Mexico. Here they helped themselves by force to a large supply of bread, and a pot, the size of a bushel in bigness, full of silver dollars, together with a chain of gold, and some jewels, which they took from the persons of the unhappy Spaniards whom they arrested in their flight out of the town. From southern Mexico they sailed without stopping till they reached the forty-second degree of north latitude, and then, although it was the beginning of June, the weather changed abruptly from warmth to biting cold, so that the very ropes of the ship were stiff and the rain changed into sleet. The *Golden Hinde* continued nevertheless to sail northwards till she reached the forty-eighth degree of latitude, and here so severe was the cold that Drake turned the ship about and sailed back to more southern latitudes. In other words, he turned his ship round just before he might have sighted the great strait discovered many years later, and named Juan de Fuca.<sup>1</sup> In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries this

<sup>1</sup> See p. 75.

passage was known as the Straits of Anian. It is, of course, merely an arm of the sea which separates Vancouver Island from the opposite coast of Washington. Perhaps it was just as well for Drake that he failed to see this strait, which he would otherwise have thought was the greatly-desired passage across North America; and he might have wasted a whole season cruising round Vancouver Island before he discovered his mistake. As it was, he sailed quickly southward before the north wind till he reached "a convenient and fit harbour", probably none other than the subsequently famous San Francisco, which he and his crew were the first white men to discover.

Here he remained till the 23 July, 1579, during all of which time, notwithstanding it was the height of summer, he and his men were continually visited by a nipping cold. Considering how mild and even warm is the climate of San Francisco all the year round, this must have been a very unusual event in its climate. The growth of vegetation was arrested, and even the birds hesitated to make their nests and incubate their eggs on account of this extraordinary and unseasonable cold, due no doubt to the prevalence in summertime of the north-westerly or northerly winds. Some of his sailors had penetrated before this voyage into the Arctic Ocean as far north as  $72^{\circ}$ , and yet declared that they had felt no such bitter cold there in the Arctic summer as they did in the months of June and July at (what was afterwards called) San Francisco. Soon after coming to an anchor in this harbour<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that the identification of Drake's stopping place on the Californian Coast with San Francisco has been called in question and even denied. At the same time the description given of the harbour of refuge in all contemporary records of the voyage of the *Golden Hinde* cannot in their geography answer to any other place.

the people of the country showed themselves, sending first of all a messenger to greet the Europeans in a canoe, who from the time he left the shore till he reached the ship spoke continually and no doubt with assurances of peaceable intentions. At last, when still at a certain distance from the ship, he stopped his paddling and began a long and tedious oration, using in its delivery many gestures and signs. This ended, he rowed back again to the shore. Then he approached the ship a second time in like manner, and finally, on his third trip, brought with him a bunch of black feathers and a little basket made of rushes filled with a herb which he called *tabah* (tobacco); and both of these being tied to a short rod, he cast the offering into the pinnace, and then hurriedly paddled back again to the shore. However, the *Golden Hinde* requiring to be repaired on account of a leak, her cargo was landed, together with all the men; tents were put up and a fort was hastily erected for the defence of the ship's crew and the valuable cargo of the vessel. The natives rapidly made friends, and worshipped Drake and his men as though they were gods, an honour which they hastily disclaimed. The men were quite naked, but the women wore loose garments round the middle made of bulrushes, and deerskins over their shoulders. Their houses were low, vaulted, and partly underground, but singularly warm, snug, and waterproof. Like many other North American Indian tribes they easily gave way to emotion, especially most extravagant weeping and shrieking. This was especially a feature amongst the women, who, like the Pacific Islanders, thought it right to display their emotion by tearing their skin with their own nails, cutting themselves with shells or thorns, and covering their bodies with blood, to show how deeply they felt any joy, sorrow, or reverence. In fact, they made

themselves a disgusting spectacle with the blood streaming down their cheeks and breasts.

They were extraordinarily moved at religious services which took place on shore, for these strange English pirates and robbers delighted in religious services and in the recital of prayers, the singing of psalms, and the reading aloud of chapters from the Bible. Above all, the poor Indians liked listening to the white men's singing, and constantly entreated them to repeat their psalms. Some days later the king or chief of the district himself came, a man of goodly stature and comely person, attended by a guard of a hundred tall warriors. This king, or *hyoh*, brought with him further presents of network bags of the herb *tabah*, the use of which, apparently, was not known to either Drake or his men; also a root called *peta*, of which the natives made a kind of meal which they baked into bread. This may have been a kind of potato.

The *hyoh* and his people seemed to indicate by their gestures (for of course no one could understand their language) that they wished the white men to become overlords of their country. Nothing loath, Drake christened the land (from its white cliffs, and also that it might have some affinity with his own country) New Albion, and solemnly proclaimed it to be a part of the dominions of Her Most Excellent Majesty Queen Elizabeth, in order that the riches and treasures "wherewith the upland countries abound"<sup>1</sup> might add to the wealth of her kingdom. Thus the region which the Spaniards afterwards rediscovered and called California<sup>2</sup> was first reached by an

<sup>1</sup> A curious prognostication of the gold which was subsequently to be derived from California.

<sup>2</sup> California (see p. 17) was first given as a name to the long peninsula (supposed then to be an island) of Lower California. The name gradually extended up the coast as the Spanish advanced their settlements in the eighteenth century.

## Drake on Coasts of South America 139

English ship and was annexed to the British dominions, an episode curiously lost sight of centuries afterwards when Great Britain was seeking for grounds on which to base an annexation of the Pacific coast of North America. The little islands in front of San Francisco, celebrated even in Drake's time for their abundance of sea-lions, were named by him the Islands of St. James.

The *Golden Hinde* anchored off these islands on 24 July, and spent a day there, getting great provision of seals' flesh, of sea birds, and of shellfish, and then sailed away across the Pacific Ocean straight for the Molucca Islands, in the manner and with the results described in my work on the Pioneers in Australasia. Finally, the *Golden Hinde* reached Plymouth safely on 26 September, 1580.

Queen Elizabeth at first hesitated as to whether she could take any public notice of Drake's wonderful achievement, lest she might thus seem to countenance his piratical acts against the Spaniards; but soon overcame her reluctance, accepted an invitation to attend a banquet on the *Golden Hinde* off Deptford, and then and there knighted Drake, with warm commendations for his splendid achievements. And splendid, and of world-wide and time-long importance, was his voyage round the world and across the Pacific Ocean. He was a vainglorious,<sup>1</sup> unscrupulous

<sup>1</sup> Though apparently of little more than yeoman extraction and rustic Devonshire origin he was truly of Shakespeare's time and spirit, with an imagination and power of language and extensive vocabulary denoting great self-education, keen observation, and close reading of all attainable books. But though fastidious in dress, and loving beauty in all forms—music, handsome furniture—in his surroundings, he was not of handsome or romantic appearance, as falsely represented in our own day in pictures or on the stage. Drake was rather inclined to be short (about 5 feet 6 inches): he had a large head, broad, short face, with high forehead and pointed chin, a short blunt nose slightly turned up, and reddish-brown hair and beard. As regards his upbringing, however, it should be noted that though born near Tavistock, in Devonshire, he was educated in East Kent, his father, once a farmer, having become a clergyman and been given a living near the Medway, and a chaplaincy connected with the queen's ships.



man, who did not hesitate to murder in a judicial manner Thomas Doughty, who might have been his rival. His robbery of the Spanish forts and ships was without any justification, except as an act of private revenge for his own sufferings at the hands of the Spaniards years before; yet in regard to both Spaniards and Portuguese he was not needlessly cruel, and gave them their liberty and something to live on, after he had taken from them what he required. On several occasions, by his forbearing attitude and a certain nobility of disposition, he avoided wars with the Amerindian peoples, sympathizing with them, as he did most keenly, for the way in which they had been maltreated by the Spaniards. He was certainly one of the founders of the British Empire and of the United States by the way in which he pricked the Spanish bubble, showing to Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Dutchmen alike the hollowness of the Spanish pretensions to a monopoly of the New World, and the weakness of their defence of this monopoly.

The subsequent career of Drake need only be touched on briefly here. Official war between Spain and England broke out in 1585, and Drake led a fleet to the Cape Verde Islands (the strategic importance of which he realized long before anyone else), and thence to Hispaniola in the West Indies, where his ships captured the Spanish town of San Domingo, their only important settlement in Hispaniola, founded by Diego Colon, the brother of Columbus, in 1504. Here is a description of the city of San Domingo in 1586, recorded by the historian of Drake's expedition:—

“The king's house, where the chief governor of the city and country was appointed always to lodge, was apparently a splendid building, with the principal recep-

tion rooms on the first floor. These were reached by ascending a broad staircase, at the head of which was a handsome spacious place to walk in, somewhat like unto a gallery. On one of the walls right over against you as you enter the said place, so that your eye cannot escape the sight of it, there is described and painted on a very large escutcheon the arms of the King of Spain; and in the lower part of the said scutcheon there is likewise descried a globe containing the whole circuit of the sea and earth. The fore-quarters of a rearing horse rise from above this globe, holding in his mouth a scroll on which was painted these words in Latin, *Non sufficit orbis*, which is as much as to say that the world sufficeth not. When Drake enquired what this proud device meant, some of the commissioners who had arrived to trade with him about the ransom of the town shook their heads and smiled sadly as if greatly ashamed. Where-upon his boastful companions told them that if the Queen of England should resolutely prosecute her war against the King of Spain he would find it hard enough to keep that which he had already, rather than to complain that he lacked other worlds to conquer."

It was a subject of some surprise to Drake and his men that such a famous and goodly city with a considerable population of well-dressed people should afford no great store of gold and silver. He explained this by pointing out that the greater part of the native Amerindian population of Hispaniola had been nearly extinguished by Spanish tyranny, and as there were no more natives to work the mines, no more gold could be obtained from the island, only copper, which was still easily acquired. Nevertheless, Hispaniola even then possessed value on account of the ease with which the sugar cane and the

ginger root were cultivated, and the rapidity with which the oxen and pigs, originally introduced by the Spaniards not more than eighty years before, had run wild and multiplied to an inconceivable extent. The herbage on which they fed made these beasts big and fat, while their hides proved to be a valuable article of export, and were to prove in the next century a source of attraction to English and French pirates as potent as the gold and silver of the sixteenth century and the dyewoods of the eighteenth century.

The Englishmen of Drake's 1585-6 expedition found in San Domingo a great store of strong wine, sweet oil, vinegar, olives, and excellent wheatmeal packed in casks, besides woollen and linen cloth and silk; there was also much porcelain obtained from the trade with the Philippines and China.

From San Domingo Drake proceeded to the city of Cartagena, on the north coast of what is now the republic of Colombia. Cartagena was occupied for six weeks and finally ransomed for a sum equivalent to about £55,000. In the year following he performed his heroic feat of destroying 10,000 tons of hostile Spanish shipping in the Bay of Cadiz: heroic and, from a patriotic point of view, praiseworthy, since it crippled the power of Spain to punish England for infringing her monopoly of the New World. In 1588 he took a leading part in attacking and dispersing the Spanish Armada. In the following year he was put in command of a fleet which was to snatch Lisbon from the Spaniards and restore the Portuguese monarchy; but here he failed through quarrelling with the English general who commanded the English landing force.

Five years afterwards, however (in 1595), Drake and

Sir John Hawkins jointly commanded a fleet which was to ravage the Spanish West Indies; but these two great commanders and cousins fell out, and the expedition was mismanaged. The Spaniards, moreover, were better prepared to resist it than in earlier years. Whilst the fleet was passing through the Virgin Islands (the northernmost of the Lesser Antilles), Sir John Hawkins fell ill and died. Drake soon afterwards delivered a desperate attack on the town of San Juan in Porto Rico, but was compelled to retire after a loss of forty or fifty men. He sailed on towards central South America, capturing and plundering, amongst other places, Santa Marta, near the mouth of the Magdalena River (Colombia), and the much-plagued Nombre de Dios, on the north coast of the Panamá peninsula. Here he landed and tried with 750 soldiers to cross the Isthmus of Panamá. But he was defeated on the way with great loss and obliged to return to his ship at Nombre de Dios. Here, with disappointment and the effects of the climate, he fell ill, and died on 28 January, 1596. He was buried in a leaden coffin on or near the coast of one of the Escudos Islands, about 100 miles to the west of Nombre de Dios, near the Bocas del Toro.

## CHAPTER VI

### Raleigh and Guiana

THE next most important steps in the pioneering work which founded the British Empire in Tropical America were taken by SIR WALTER RALEIGH. This great man was born in 1552 at a farm called Hayes, in the parish of Budleigh in Devonshire, the fourth son of a country gentleman. He studied at Oxford (Oriel College), and went out in 1569 to the wars in France to assist the Huguenots. After a stay of six years in France he returned to London and resided in the Middle Temple, where he gave himself up to the study of Spanish. Later he took part with his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, in an unsuccessful expedition to North America, and then he fought with the English forces against the Spaniards who had landed in Ireland.

Becoming a courtier, and gaining the favour of Queen Elizabeth, and probably with it a certain amount of wealth, he twice assisted to finance expeditions for the colonization of North America, the more important of which was that which founded the British settlement on the coast of North Carolina (Roanoke), a region to which Raleigh gave the name of Virginia, in honour of Queen Elizabeth. On these expeditions in all he spent £40,000, an enormous sum for that period; but they all came to nothing, or at least nothing at the time, though the principal city in North Carolina bears the name of Raleigh

to this day in recognition of his efforts to establish English claims over this region. From these voyages to North Carolina and Virginia, Raleigh derived the potato,<sup>1</sup> which he caused to be planted on his estate at Youghal, near Cork. Its cultivation was soon afterwards introduced from Ireland into Lancashire. About the same time, also, Raleigh—or others who had returned from these unsuccessful experiments in “Virginia”—brought back with them the custom of smoking tobacco. We have already noticed that Sir Francis Drake was offered tobacco under the name of *tabah*—a term almost universal over Central America and the West Indies—as a ceremonial present, but apparently he did not perceive the use of the herb, although of course the Spaniards long before this had become inveterate smokers.

Raleigh took part, so far as the furnishing of ships and money was concerned, in other expeditions of discovery to America, both North and South. Where he got all the money from that he lavished on these undertakings it is difficult to understand, unless it was through the generosity of Queen Elizabeth, or the working of certain monopolies she had given him; because he does not seem to have inherited any very large amount from his father. Amongst other directions in which he spent his money to the great advantage of English maritime discovery was the purchasing of foreign manuscripts, relations of travel chiefly in Portuguese and Spanish. These he handed over to the celebrated Richard Hakluyt for translation and publication. He was also most active

<sup>1</sup> The cultivation of this tuber was at that time widespread over western and northern South America, Central America, and the warmer parts of North America. The original wild plant (*Solanum tuberosum*) was a native of mountainous or temperate regions in Central and South America. The Spaniards quickly spread the use of it. (See pp. 102 and 138).

and successful in advocating the creation of an English fleet, pointing out that with an efficient fleet England was unassailable by a foreign power, and without it no amount of land fortifications could prevent invasion and perhaps conquest. But he did not neglect the land forces of the Crown; on the contrary, he raised several companies of volunteers and created a militia for Cornwall. In 1592, however, he got into serious trouble over his private affairs, and it was not until two years later that he regained some measure of the queen's favour. Wishing consequently to recover altogether his position at Court, and no doubt to enrich himself at the same time, he decided to undertake and command an expedition to Guiana, to search for a region supposed to be extremely rich in gold—the famous kingdom of El Dorado of the Spaniards.

From Spanish conquistadores and wandering friars and missionaries there had reached Europe the extraordinary stories referred to in Chapter III about the Golden King somewhere in the northern part of South America, beyond the coast mountains of Venezuela and Colombia (then called New Grenada and Cundinamarca). Behind these mountains and in the basin of the Orinoko, or of its southern affluent the Karoni, was said to be an immense lake of fresh water, the White Sea. On the shores of this lake (the legends ran) there were tribes consisting of nothing but women—warlike women who ordinarily dwelt by themselves and fiercely opposed any intruders into their country, though they occasionally arranged to meet the men of other tribes at stated seasons. But, above all, concealed in remote forests and inaccessible mountains there was an unconquered empire of Amerindians, similar to, but more wealthy and powerful than, the native empires

or confederacies of Mexico, Chibcha, and Peru, already conquered by the Spaniards. The monarch of this realm, as already related, dwelt in a palace made of gold and was clad in ornaments or armour of solid gold. The fabulous region over which he ruled was vainly sought for in South America during at least a hundred years after the first rumours of "El Dorado" began in about 1528.

Like most similar fables in geography, the "Great White Sea of Parima", associated with the story of the Golden King, was based on some foundation. The tremendous floods of the many rivers in Guiana and in the basin of the Orinoko during the rainy season created lakes of shallow water perhaps 15,000 square miles in area, quite enough to give some wandering Spaniard the impression of a great inland sea. Moreover, in the Chibcha country, in northern Colombia, gold ornaments, vessels, and adornments of buildings existed to a very great extent; whilst, as we now know, gold was fairly abundant in the rocks and river beds of Guiana. As to the nations of Amazons, or warlike women, they too had some slight foundation in certain customs which existed amongst the native tribes of that region, descriptions of which may be found in various works on anthropology and the early history of South America.

Raleigh first dispatched in 1594 a sea captain (Whiddon) in a small vessel to examine the approaches to "Guiana",<sup>1</sup> that is to say, the coast from Trinidad to the mouth of the Orinoko. Apparently his report was favourable, so a larger expedition was rapidly organized, and Raleigh left

<sup>1</sup> The "Guiana" of Raleigh and the early Dutch navigators was scarcely the region we now know by that name, but the hilly country on the south-east flanks of the Orinoko, immediately to the north-west of real Guiana. The Spaniards rendered the name "Guayana".



in command of it on 6 February, 1595. His expedition consisted of five ships, of which one small one was lost off the coast of Spain. With very little incident, except that two more ships of the squadron were lost sight of, Raleigh only reached Trinidad on 22 March, with two vessels. Trinidad at that time was practically unoccupied by the Spaniards but fairly well populated with Amerindians. Leaving his ships at anchor off what is now called Port-of-Spain (the capital of Trinidad) he coasted round the island searching for watering places and good ports for anchorage. In this way he reached the extraordinary pitch lake of Trinidad, in a district then called by the Spanish *La Brea*. This lake is situated on the south-west side of the island, on a small peninsula. It is nearly circular, and about a mile and a half in diameter. The surface usually looks hard and black, like the asphalt of our streets, but under the fierce rays of the sun it becomes soft or even liquid.

Raleigh was greatly struck with the value of this pitch, and rightly predicted that it would some day be of very great importance, as all the ships of the world might be laden with it, and in his opinion it was more valuable than the pitch of the pine trees of Scandinavia, because it did not so easily melt in the sun and was therefore well suited for employment in tropical countries.

He rejoined his ships off Port-of-Spain, having by this time acquired some knowledge of Trinidad, which he describes as having the form of a sheep hook. It would have been more appropriate if he had compared its shape to that of a lowered flag, the stem of which would be represented by the long mountain ridge of the northern part of the island, a ridge which is obviously a continuation of the Paria Mountains of the adjoining Venezuelan

peninsula. These mountains are very striking in appearance, though they only rise to altitudes of 3000 feet. In Raleigh's day Trinidad was not only fairly well populated by Amerindians, but it had abundance of wild beasts, most of which are now extinct. He notes especially the deer and the wild pigs (peccaries), and is sharp enough to discern that it possesses a good many beasts that are absent from the other West Indian Islands. The native name of Trinidad was Kairi.

At Port-of-Spain Raleigh found a small company of Spanish soldiers, who, however, were quite willing to enter into peaceful relations with the English, and very ready to buy linen and other things they required from the two ships. Having been for many years without wine, they were only too ready to accept entertainment on board, and in their chatter they told much about the Orinoko and the regions whither Raleigh was bound. They spoke the more freely because they believed him to have been driven out of his course by contrary winds, and really to be on the way to relieve the colonists whom he had abandoned to their fate in North Carolina (Virginia). At some distance inland at the town of St. Joseph was a Spanish governor, Berreo y Oruño, who, according to Raleigh, had treated with great treachery the crew of Captain Whiddon's ship, which had visited Trinidad the year before. These men, by the instructions of Berreo, had been invited on shore to kill deer, only to fall into an ambush of Spanish soldiers, by which eight of them were captured. Raleigh therefore determined to revenge himself on Berreo and make war upon the Spaniards without warning. As usual, to hearten himself for this seeming treachery (after his good reception by the soldiers at Port-of-Spain) he relates the cruelties inflicted by the Spaniards

on the natives of Trinidad, how their chieftains were kept in chains and made to work like slaves, and at times tortured by having boiling bacon fat dropped on their skins. He also felt that to leave the Spaniards in power in Trinidad and his ships anchored off that island, while he was four or five hundred miles away examining the mouths of the Orinoko in small boats, would be to risk the complete ruin of his expedition; accordingly he suddenly attacked the guard at Port-of-Spain one evening and put them to the sword (a proceeding quite in accord with the morality of the day), then marched with a body of 100 soldiers to the Spanish capital of St. Joseph, which he reached and took by break of day, the Spaniards flying after a trifling resistance and leaving their governor a prisoner in the hands of Raleigh, who burnt St. Joseph and carried off Berreo to his ship.

On his return to Port-of-Spain he found to his great delight that the two ships which had been lost sight of off the coast of Spain had safely arrived, which meant, of course, considerable reinforcements in the shape of men and provisions. Before leaving Trinidad, however, he called together all the native chiefs or "captains" of the island, especially those that were hostile to the Spaniards, and through an interpreter whom he had brought from England, and who knew the Arawak or Carib languages, made them understand something about himself and the great queen of the far northern island whom he served. The Trinidadians were only too willing to place themselves under her protection whom they now styled "Ezrabeta Kassipuna Akwerewana", a title which, according to Raleigh, meant "Elizabeth the Greatest of Princes". Berreo y Oruño he took with him, a prisoner and hostage. He is described as a well-descended gentleman, who had

long served the Spanish King in Italy and the Netherlands, "very valiant and liberal, and of good assurance". Raleigh declares he entertained him as courteously as his means permitted, and Berreo in return seems to have given him a good deal of information about the region of the Orinoko. He started from Trinidad (which, it will be observed, lies immediately opposite the northern half of the Orinoko delta) with about a hundred men and a month's provisions, all of which were carried in an old Spanish galley, an English barge, two wherries, and a small boat or dinghy: five vessels altogether.

Raleigh had with him an Indian pilot, who, he hoped at first, would lead his expedition through the extraordinary maze of streams in the great Orinoko delta till they could reach the main river. "All the earth doth not yield the like confluence of streams and branches, the one crossing the other so many times, and all so fair and large and so like to one another that no man can see which to take. If we went by the sun or compass, hoping thereby to go directly one way or another, yet that way we were also carried in a circle amongst multitudes of islands, and every island so bordered by high trees as no man could see any farther than the breadth of the river." Raleigh entered the Orinoko delta by a river which he styled the Red Cross, now known, however, as the Manamo. This is the westernmost branch of the Orinoko. Before the English had penetrated far inland, the local Amerindians of the Warau or Siawani tribe had attempted to capture and kill their pilot for daring to bring a white man's ship into their country. The pilot escaped, and Raleigh with great promptness seized an old Indian and declared that he should be held as a hostage and be beheaded if the pilot was not returned. Nevertheless the natives on shore pur-

sued the flying pilot, hunting him through the woods with their dogs in full cry, as though he were a deer; but he managed to reach the riverside, climbed a tree that overhung the stream, and, as Raleigh's boat was coasting by, leapt into the water and swam to it.

Owing to the way their pilot had been treated, Raleigh felt himself justified in retaining the old man he had seized as a hostage. His men therefore tied his hands together. But despite this treatment he proved a most valuable guide; for Ferdinando, the pilot, had not been to the Orinoko for twelve years and knew very little about the labyrinth of its delta. These people who had received Raleigh with such hostility were, however, a very comely and somewhat civilized tribe of Amerindians; but they were warlike and suspicious, having constantly to defend themselves from the raids of the cannibal Caribs, besides having only too good reason to distrust and dislike the Spaniards. In summer (that is to say, the dry season) they inhabited houses on the ground, but in the wintertime or rainy season they dwelt in houses cleverly constructed in the forks of the tall trees which rose above the flooded delta. The floors of the houses, both above and below, would be made out of laths split from a palm tree (a species of *Euterpe*). Another palm tree (*Manicaria*)<sup>1</sup> had fronds

<sup>1</sup> The identification of the palms described by Raleigh is derived from the notes furnished by Sir Robert H. Schomburgk to the Hakluyt Society's edition of *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, &c., &c.*, by Sir Walter Raleigh. This work of Schomburgk's, published in 1848, is a remarkable book, packed with sound knowledge of northern South America. Robert Hermann Schomburgk, to whom further reference is made in this chapter, was born in 1802 in Prussian Saxony, went out to the West Indies as a young man, and spent several years surveying the little island of Anegada in the Virgin Islands group. His work was published by the Royal Geographical Society of London, and this body sent him, in 1835, to explore the hinterland of British Guiana, where amongst other wonders he discovered the largest water lily in the world, which he named the *Victoria regia*. The British Government next employed him, in 1841-6, to survey

which made an excellent thatch. On the floor of laths would be deposited a mass of clay on which a fire could be kept burning. The light of these fires at night, together with their smoke and the mist rising from the waters, suffused the forest with a mysterious and beautiful red glow. Everyone, of course, slept in his or her hammock slung under the thatched roofs. When inhabiting the ground the Indians would light smoky fires under or near the hammocks, so as to drive away the mosquitoes, and in the rainy season would for the same reason sling their hammocks from branches high up in the trees, so as to be above the levels to which the mosquitoes usually flew. They practised no agriculture, partly because of the inundations of the river, but also because Nature supplied them with all the food they needed. They feasted generally on the "cabbages" of the palm trees, that is to say, the tender mass of unexpanded fronds in the heart of the palm; and with the assistance of their dogs they ran down and killed deer, peccaries, and large rodents, sometimes even jaguars. The rivers abounded in fish and the forests in all manner of fruits and nuts, besides an immense variety of birds which could be killed and eaten. When anyone of importance died the body was laid out in the air to putrefy, and when the flesh in this way had been removed from the bones the skeleton was hung up in the house of the dead person, the skull being decked with many-coloured feathers and the bones of the limbs with gold plates. In the more southern regions (Raleigh relates) the Arawak Indians pounded the bones of their chiefs into powder, which was then mixed with water or

the northern and western frontiers of this colony and fix its boundaries with Venezuela. He endeavoured to make British Guiana as big as possible. He served afterwards in Santo Domingo and in Siam, and died in 1862.

palm wine and drunk by the people together with the wives and friends of the deceased.

The third day after entering this river, Manamo, the galley ran aground and stuck so fast that Raleigh feared his expedition had met with a great disaster, and that sixty men would have to be left behind, living like birds upon the trees, since the floods were out and there was very little solid ground. With great difficulty, however, they got her afloat again, and after four days' further adventures and difficulties they emerged into the great Amana, the main stream of the Orinoko River. Three days more of rowing and sailing against the stream reduced his company to despair. They were not, like the earlier Spanish explorers who performed such marvellous voyages of discovery up the great South American rivers, provided with crews of patient, silent, toiling, naked Indians, paddling native canoes; but they were Englishmen, clothed in hot, stuffy garments, attempting to row or to sail heavy, clumsily made English boats against the tumultuous stream of one of the greatest rivers of the world. Raleigh in the earlier part of his book describes in a few sentences the utter discomfort of this voyage of discovery, how these small boats were packed with 100 men and cargoes of provisions and stores, the men being obliged to lie without shelter, in the streaming rain and under the burning sun, upon hard boards. They were compelled to prepare their food in the boats (there being seldom any place on which to land and make a fire); while with the incessant rain, followed by the broiling sun and the close confinement of so many men thrust together in wet clothes, "no person in England could be found more unsavoury and loathsome" than these frowsy, sulky seamen and soldiers, especially to Raleigh's delicately nurtured self, who had

previously been accustomed to refined society and the most sumptuous of dwellings.

After the expedition had reached the main Orinoko the weather became extremely hot, and the river was bordered with such high trees that the pleasant breezes were kept away. The observations, moreover, that were taken by Raleigh and the sailing masters seem to have been affected by the discomfort of the journey. Already on reaching Trinidad they had miscalculated their position, and imagined themselves to be about 140 miles nearer the Equator than they really were. As they journeyed south and west up the Orinoko this miscalculation increased, so that they had soon exaggerated their approach to the Equator and the distance they had covered by about 280 miles. Raleigh's men would probably have mutinied and insisted on returning had he not kept assuring them that one day's journey more would enable them to reach a land where they would find abundance of food and all the ease and rest they required. Even as they advanced, although the stream proved to be stronger and stronger against them, and their progress slower, nevertheless the country along the banks of the Orinoko became more attractive. The trees were found to bear fruits good to eat, and the flowers "seemed of a variety so great as to make ten volumes of herbals". They were able now to vary their diet with the fruits of the country, and sometimes with birds and fish which they killed. At this season (according to Sir Robert Schomburgk, whose edition of the description of Raleigh's journey has already been referred to in a footnote) the Manicole palm (a species of *Euterpe*) bore its ripened fruit, and probably attracted flocks of blue and yellow macaws and many other gorgeous parrots, large curassows and guans (distant rela-



tions of the pheasants that lead an arboreal life in Tropical America), and tree ducks (*Dendrocygna*). On the ground below the trees would be found the musk ducks (*Cairina*) which we miscall "Muscovy"; and all these birds, whom Raleigh describes as being of "all colours, carnation, crimson, orange, tawny, purple, green, spotted and striped", were easily killed by the fowling-pieces of the Englishmen, and heartened up the sailors with their savoury flesh. That of the blue and yellow macaws, for example, made excellent soup, resembling hare in taste, while the splendid curassows were like turkeys in their flesh and flavour, and the guans recalled the ordinary pheasant. Both the musk ducks and the tree ducks were delicious eating, as the present writer can bear witness.

At this stage in their travels the old Indian pilot of the Warau (Siawani) people told them if they would enter a river which came in on the right hand with their barge and wherries, leaving the big galley at anchor in the Orinoko, he would take them to a town of the Arawak Indians where they would find an abundance of cassava bread, fowls, fish, and palm wine; saying that if they left the place where the galley was anchored at noon they would get back again by midnight. Very willingly Raleigh adopted this suggestion, and started in his barge with eight musketeers, Captains Gifford and Calfield following him in two wherries, each with four musketeers. Believing that they would get so quickly to this haven of delight, where they would feast on the plenty afforded by the hospitable Arawaks, they took no provisions with them. When they had rowed for three hours they became anxious at seeing no sign of a house, and asking the pilot were told that it was still a little farther. In three hours more, the sun being almost set, they began to sus-

pect that they were being betrayed by their guide. Night fell, and still they were obliged to keep on rowing, and still nothing in the shape of a town presented itself. Their poor seamen were heartbroken and ready to give up the ghost in utter fatigue. They reckoned that they had now put forty miles between themselves and the big galley, and discussed whether they should not hang the pilot for his treachery. They would have done so but that it was a pitch-dark night, the river was narrow, trees overhanging it from side to side (so that they were driven to cut a passage through with their swords), and without the pilot they might never again find their way back to where the galley had been anchored. The poor trembling Indian assured them that it was only a little farther on as they came to each turning and each turning revealed nothing. At last, at one in the morning, they saw a light and heard the dogs howling in a native village. This was the great town they had been led to expect, but it was almost deserted, for its chief had gone with many canoes far up the Orinoko to trade for gold and to buy women slaves of the cannibals.

However, in his house they found a good store of bread, fish, fowls,<sup>1</sup> and palm wine. When morning dawned and they returned towards their galley, bringing with them a quantity of bread, dried fish, and fowls, they noted how beautiful was the country, "the most beautiful that ever mine eyes had beheld", on either side of this small river. Whereas all that they had seen before was

<sup>1</sup> The domestic fowl, of course, was quite unknown in any part of North or South America until introduced by the Spaniards. It spread, however, with such rapidity that, less than a hundred years after its introduction, it was already found in most parts of the Orinoko basin at the time of Raleigh's voyage. The Amerindians valued fowls, however, not for their flesh, but because of the crowing powers of the cock, who served them, as he did so many other nations in their stage of culture, as a clock at night-time.

dense forest, and probably forest rising out of water, here they beheld plains of short and green grass decked with groves of handsome trees, just as though they were parks that had been carefully laid out. As they rowed downstream the deer came to drink at the waterside "as though they had been used to a keeper's call". Along the river banks were innumerable water birds—probably the tall, ivory-white, black-headed jabiru stork, scarlet ibises, white herons, horned screamers, and glossy trumpeters. The water swarmed with strange fishes, some of marvellous bigness, but the river was most of all remarkable for its enormous caimans and crocodiles, so much so that in the local language it was called the River of Crocodiles. In fact, before they entered this river, a negro of their company dived from the galley to swim in the mouth of the river, and before their eyes was taken and devoured by one of these lagartos.<sup>1</sup>

After having rejoined the galley, and started once more up the Orinoko, they again ran short of food, but this time Captain Gifford in his wherry espied four canoes coming down river. He started in chase of them, and the Indians in two of the canoes, giving up the struggle, ran them ashore and fled into the woods. The canoes, when captured, were found to be laden with cassava bread, which was no doubt being taken down the river to be conveyed for sale to the Spanish pearl islands and ports of Venezuela. In the canoes which were not captured were Spaniards.

<sup>1</sup> Raleigh styles these monstrous reptiles "lagartos", the Spanish word (originally meaning lizard) from which the English "alligator" is derived. Strictly speaking, these monsters were not alligators, as the real alligator is only found in the waters of North America and of China. They were a nearly related genus of large caimans, and probably also a form of real crocodile, *Crocodilus acutus*. The caimans, looking like monstrous, broad-nosed alligators, are larger than the crocodiles, about 20 feet long. The American crocodile above-named probably does not exceed 12 feet in length.

One of these was apparently a gold refiner, and his basket, containing his quicksilver, saltpetre, and other things for the trial of metals, and also the dust of such ore as he had refined, were found in an Indian basket hidden in the bushes.

Raleigh's men, being now reassured as to their food supply, and no doubt heartened by this evidence of the existence of gold, declared themselves ready to proceed farther. Having arranged to retain in his service each of the men amongst the Indians who had been paddling these canoes for the Spaniards, he dismissed all the others with presents, and gave them one of the two canoes he had captured, also sending back in this to his home the Siawa guide and Ferdinando, the first Indian pilot, together with a good supply of provisions and a letter which they promised to deliver to his ships at anchor off Trinidad. The river expedition then started once more on its way upstream under the guidance of the new pilot, whom the Spaniards had already named Martin. After fifteen days of voyaging, and many difficulties with the tiresome old galley, which was perpetually running aground and having to be painfully hauled off with ropes and anchors, they descried afar off the mountains of Guiana, in other words, the Imataka Hills, which are actually on the north-western borderland of British Guiana, and have really turned out to be the gold-bearing region hoped for by Raleigh. (Their peaks, however, probably do not exceed 2000 feet in height.) They had by now got as far as the place now called Barrancas, which is at no very great distance above the branching of the Orinoko delta. Here they saw three Indian canoes, after which they hastened with their barge and wherries. Two of them escaped, but the third one was caught up with, and the interpreter,

having explained that these white men were no Spaniards, but belonged to quite a different race of sea people (Paranaghiri), the natives became friendly and sold the Englishmen fish and "turtles'" eggs. As to this last delicacy—the eggs of the water tortoise of the *Podocnemis* genus<sup>1</sup>—they soon found thousands for themselves when they landed on a sandbank, and the seamen thought them delicious and restorative. A local chief of the Arawak people, named Toparimaka, came down the next morning with thirty or forty followers, and brought to the Englishmen divers sorts of fruit, native wine, bread, fish, and meat. In return they gave him good Spanish wine to drink, his own fermented liquors being derived from palm sap. They afterwards went to visit this chief in his town, and caroused with the native beverages (palm wine), which, however, were not altogether agreeable to the taste, for they were made exceedingly hot with red pepper and flavoured with the juice of various herbs and fruits.

This palm wine was kept in great earthen pots, each holding from 10 to 12 gallons, pots that were fabricated by the Indian women without any potter's wheel, but merely shaped by the hand, and resembling in appearance very much the large vessels made by the Etruscans—a resemblance, however, which was not apparent to Raleigh. The bread which they ate with this palm wine was made of cassava or manioc (see pp. 18 and 19). The Arawak Indians who received Raleigh at their village also prepared from the manioc root an intoxicating drink. The tuber was

<sup>1</sup> These are of two species: *Podocnemis arrau* and *P. terekay* of the *Pelomedusidae* family of side-necked water tortoises. The eggs are round, with rather flexible, thin, chalky shells. They are often deposited to the number of 120 in a single hollow or nest. The eggs of the second species, however, are smaller than those of the *arrau* and about the size of a pigeon's egg, but much more delicate in flavour than the eggs of the *arrau*, which are the size of fowls' eggs. These eggs are really very oily, and the tortoises themselves yield much oil from their fat.

first of all pounded into a thick paste, which was baked or charred over a fire; the native women then rinsed their mouths out with water, retaining some liquid in the mouth, however, and commenced chewing the bread in large pieces, afterwards ejecting from their mouths the thickened juice which they derived from it. This rather disgusting fluid was put into a wooden trough, or into large jars, in which a further quantity of the toasted manioc bread had been broken up. Boiling water was poured over the whole, and the sticky compound was stirred and kneaded, all portions of it not easily dissolved being once again chewed in the women's mouths and ejected once more into the pot. This process, indeed, might be repeated several times till there was not a single undissolved lump in the thick mixture. Being put aside it began to ferment in a couple of days, and on the third day was considered fit for use.<sup>1</sup>

The men who received Raleigh and his followers, after going through the ceremonies of welcome, each resorted to a hammock,<sup>2</sup> where they lay at their ease, being attended by two women who plied them with cups of intoxicating beverages. Each cup was drunk with toasts and greetings one to the other. A stranger chief who was visiting in this town for purposes of trade had been accompanied by his wife, whose beauty impressed all the Englishmen. She reminded Raleigh very strongly of a lady he had seen in England, and whom she resembled very

<sup>1</sup> This filthy stuff was so intensely liked by the South American Indians that in many districts the women lost their teeth quite young from the constant chewing of the manioc bread, which seems to bring about dental decay very rapidly. Nevertheless, the taste of this beverage is said to be far from disagreeable even to Europeans, and if offered to them must certainly be drunk, as it is so precious in the eyes of the Americans that to refuse it would cause very serious offence. A similar drink was and is made out of batatas or sweet potatoes (the latter the root of a convolvulus flower).

<sup>2</sup> These hammocks were made up of cotton thread or of the fibres, plaited into thread, of palms or pineapple leaves.

much in her features, though the colour of her complexion was darker. This woman had hair growing down almost to her feet, though some of it was tied up "in pret knots". She seemed quite conscious of her comeliness and stood in no great awe of her husband, as was the case with most of the Indian wives. Although perfectly modest, she went round greeting everybody with affability. Raleigh, shortly before describing this incident, declared with great impressiveness that he enjoined on all his officers and men to show the utmost respect to the native women, the mistreatment of whom by the Spaniards seemed to have been very bad, and the chief cause of the deadly hatred borne to them by the Amerindians of South America.

The following day the expedition returned to the main stream of the Orinoko, which Raleigh already realized was navigable by ships for a little less than 1000 miles from its mouth inland, while up its various tributaries small boats could pass till they reached a state which is now called Colombia, but which was then known as El Nuevo Reyno de Grenada. Sailing westward up the main Orinoko, Raleigh noticed that the banks began to be high and consisted of blackish-grey or leaden-coloured rocks. The dark colour of these rocks would seem to arise from their containing much oxide of iron and manganese, besides other chemical substances which, according to Sir Robert Schomburgk, emit unwholesome exhalations, gases derived from super-carburetted iron. [It is curious that much the same rock should be found bordering certain West African rivers—West Africa is very similar in geological construction to Guiana and Brazil—and that there, also, the air around them should be considered unwholesome, especially at night-time.]

But the blue-grey rocks gave place to low banks of deep red soil and fertile undulating plains. Raleigh therefore stopped his course to send a detachment of his men to go over this red land, to discover what was on the other side. This region was found to be the plains or "llanos" (pronounced *lyanos*), which extend for a considerable distance northwards as far as the coast mountains of Venezuela. During the rainy season (writes Schomburgk) they present the aspect of a sea of verdure, but during the summer are a picture of desolation owing to the effects of drought under the burning rays of an equatorial sun. The people inhabiting these plains are much darker in skin colour than the Arawaks and Caribs of the forests and mountains. In Raleigh's time these dark-skinned Indians were celebrated for the poison of their arrows. The people who were shot by them "endured the most insufferable torment in the world, and died a most ugly and lamentable death, sometimes stark mad, sometimes their bowels breaking out of their bodies, and presently discoloured as black as pitch, and so unsavoury that no man could endure to cure or attend them".

According to Schomburgk, this rather sensational description applied to the effect produced by the now famous Wurali arrow poison, which was manufactured in this most venomous form by the Makusi tribe, and was derived from a creeping plant or liana now known as *Strychnos toxifera*, yielding a kind of strychnine by infusion from its bark. When this poison had been carefully prepared it was thick and of a dark colour, and began to show its effect in about a minute from the time that it entered the blood. A fowl died in five minutes, monkeys or jaguars in about a quarter of an hour. Human beings resist the effect some time longer, but are



absolutely certain to die if they yield to the frightful thirst which the poison provokes, and take any liquid into their system. The poison varies very greatly in intensity, and weak solutions are much more easily cured. Raleigh says, with the juice of garlic; Schomburgk, by salt or sugar.

Getting near to the confluence of the Karoni with the Orinoko, Raleigh anchored at a landing place and town which he called Morequito, the name apparently of a powerful chief who had been slain by the Spaniard, Berreo y Oruña, some years before. Here he sent one of his pilots to find Morequito's uncle, a chief named Aromaira. The next day this chief arrived, having walked all the way from his house, which was 14 miles distant. He is stated to have been 110 years old, but on the same day after meeting Raleigh he walked back another 14 miles to his home. His people came to wonder at the sight of the Englishmen and to bring them down provisions in great plenty—the flesh of deer, peccaries, fowls and other birds, fish, and many excellent fruits and roots, amongst them “pinas” (pineapples), “the princess of fruit” (as Raleigh calls them),<sup>1</sup> also a supply

<sup>1</sup>In all this part of Tropical America the pineapple grows wild naturally in its native home. In a wild state the fruit is not much larger than a big apple, of a bright yellow colour, with a very strong and delicious scent, but it is stringy and full of hard black seeds, and acid in taste. It had long been cultivated by the Amerindians before Europeans came on the scene, and already the cultivated fruit was larger, sweeter, and much nicer to eat than the wild one, and had become almost without seeds. In England we never notice seeds in the pineapple at all, but in Africa, where the plant was early introduced by the Portuguese, and where it has run wild over vast districts of the Congo and West Africa, the fruit, though very juicy and large, contains an abundance of black seeds, from which, if necessary, seedlings can be raised. The fruity part of the pineapple is, of course, only a thickening of the stem round which the flowers emerge, on fibrous, juicy facets. The little flowerets are of a beautiful smalt-blue colour and contrast vividly with the rich carmine and orange tints of the scales and spines amidst which they are set. The pineapple is a member of a very important Tropical American family of lily-like plants, the *Bromeliaceae*, many members of which grow parasitically on the branches or trunks of trees. One member

of cassava bread, native wine, and a sort of parrakeet, "no bigger than wrens",<sup>1</sup> besides other sorts of parrots, both small and great; also an armadillo, which seemed to Raleigh to be barred all over with small plates like a rhinoceros, while its armoured tail he took to be a great white horn. This armadillo was probably the *Dasypus novemcinctus*, which is often eaten by the Indians of Guiana. After the centenarian chief had rested for a short time in one of Raleigh's tents, he gave Raleigh a good deal of information through the interpreter, especially on the subject of the country lying to the south, the far-famed Guiana, and the tribes which inhabited it. He himself, like the friendly chief farther to the eastward, Toparimaka, belonged to the widespread Makusi tribe. He told Raleigh much about ancient wars between these naked people of Guiana and the eastern Orinoko, and mysterious races of clothed and civilized Indians which had come down the great rivers from the far-off mountains of Colombia, or rather from that region of many rivers which was sometimes described as Lake Parima.

After his departure Raleigh sailed westward to view

of this group, which no one would take at first sight to have any relationship to the pineapple at all, is the celebrated *Tillandsia*, or Spanish Moss, which grows in enormous quantities on the trees of Florida, Texas, Mexico, and the West Indies. *Tillandsia* resembles so closely a greyish-green lichen of Africa, the *Usnea*, which in a similar way clothes all the trees of high African mountains, that it is impossible to tell the difference between them, except on close examination, though they are about as widely removed as any two members of the vegetable kingdom can be. In the flowering season *Tillandsia* has minute blue flowers like those of the pineapple, which are succeeded by seed vessels, but for the rest of the year it consists of masses of greyish-green filaments, exactly like those of the *Usnea* lichen. Another tree parasite common in Guiana and northern South America generally, which is sometimes called a mistletoe by Europeans, is not a lichen nor a Bromeliaceous plant, but a cactus, and this parasitic cactus (*Rhipsalis*) extends in its range across the Pacific Ocean to the Island of Ceylon.

<sup>1</sup>The very small parrakeets probably belonged to an exquisite genus of "Love Birds", *Psittacula*.

"the famous river called Caroli" (the Karoni). Long before they got there they heard the roar of the river falling over its great cataract before it joined the Orinoko. It was said to have been on this river that the chief Morequito (who had recently been killed by Berreo the Spaniard) had slain ten Spaniards descending from the mysterious region of Manoa, the country of El Dorado, bearing with them the value of 40,000 dollars of gold. Raleigh sent some of his native friends and interpreters to warn the chiefs of this region that he was coming, and coming as a friend. All this while, not only the Orinoko and Karoni, but all the other rivers of this region, were rising 4 and 5 feet in height, owing to the tremendous rains falling in the distant mountains. As it had become almost impossible to row against these streams, Raleigh divided his expedition into several parties, and, himself taking command of one, went overland to explore the Karoni, and, above all, to see those cataracts which made the noise that was audible for miles around.

He himself found the Karoni dividing into three parts and descending the rocks in mighty cascades, ten or twelve other falls in sight, every one as high over the other as a church tower. The river fell with such fury that the rebound of waters made it seem a continued descent of rain, and in other places raised great smokes of mist. Raleigh was a bad walker, according to his own account, but was constrained by the others to go on and on, over hills and valleys, till they came close up to the cataracts. He never saw a more beautiful country, with its abrupt hills and its fertile smiling valleys of fair green grass, the path being of hard sand and easy to march on either for horse or foot, the deer crossing it ever and again with little fear of man, the birds towards the evening singing on every tree in a

thousand different tones and notes. "Cranes and herons of white, crimson, and carnation" (there were, of course, no cranes, but numbers of white and other coloured herons, and scarlet ibises) perched on the river's banks. The air was fresh with the gentle easterly wind, and every stone that they stooped to pick up promised either gold or silver by its complexion.

This point—the falls of the Karoni—was the farthest limit of Raleigh's explorations westwards. He rejoined his boats at Morequito and began to sail and row down the Orinoko to return to his ships off Trinidad, stopping a good deal by the way to collect information about the geography and the natives of the region lying to the south of the Orinoko. He also collected many stones which he believed showed signs of containing gold, though in all probability it was no more than the glitter of iron pyrites. His stories about precious stones collected from the Indians were true in the main, but were not verified until about twenty years ago, when the first diamonds were located in the western borderland of British Guiana in close proximity to the gold also found there. So that Raleigh's stories of gold and precious stones based on native information have proved in the main to be correct, though the abundance of both is not so amazing as he wished to believe. He made a journey overland into the country of Upata, beautiful plains with copses scattered here and there by the riverside, and as full of deer<sup>1</sup> as any forest

<sup>1</sup> The deer referred to by Raleigh and the other pioneers of Orinoko and Guiana exploration belonged to two distinct groups of a single genus: *Mazama* (for which name some zoologists substitute *Odocoileus* or *Cariacus*). The largest and commonest form seen by Raleigh would probably have been the Savanna deer (*Mazama americana savannarum*), in size about equal to a roebuck or a small fallow deer. The antlers have usually four to five tines, and their ends curve round in front like those of the closely related Virginian deer. The colour of the fur is greyish-brown, speckled with white. On throat and lips the hair is white, and there is a black spot on the side of the

or park in England. In the Orinoko and in its tributaries hereabout he noticed the manati<sup>1</sup> in abundance and ate of its excellent and wholesome meat, which indeed is of good flavour, tasting both like pork and veal.

Having collected in this region more stones supposed to contain gold, he returned to the Orinoko, bringing back with him from this excursion not only this collection of stones and stories of diamonds, but a native description of the wonderful mountain of Roraima, which was discovered several centuries afterwards by British explorers. Raleigh, in his fertile imagination, believed that he had caught a distant glimpse of this immense table mountain (which rises to an altitude of 8580 feet), and that it appeared like a white church tower of an exceeding height, with a mighty river falling over the top of it, touching no part of its sides, but descending to the ground with a terrible noise and clamour.

Raleigh afterwards explored the main stream of the Orinoko and a good many of its branches, until he reached the vicinity of the seacoast, besides going inland up the little Imataka River. Turning once more northwards, the hearts of his men grew cold to behold the great rage and increase of the Orinoko. Terrific thunderstorms occurred day after day, and the waves raised by the wind opposing the violent current of the great stream threatened con-

underlip. The other form of deer in northern South America is the Wood Brocket, also a species of *Mazama* (*M. nemorivaga*) but very different in appearance to the Savanna deer; being as small as a goat, with a pepper-and-salt brown fur tinged with yellowish red, and short antlers reduced to simple prongs. The deer of South and Central America all belong to the one genus *Mazama*, with the exception of a very small deer with minute antlers, of the high Andes Mountains—*Pudua*. These American deer are distantly related to the Roes of Europe and Asia. But they form a distinct and peculiar group.

<sup>1</sup> The manati is an aquatic mammal of the Sirenian order, very distantly related to elephants and hyraxes, and common in its distribution to both West Africa and eastern Tropical America, one of the many pieces of evidence of a former land bridge connecting the two continents. See pp. 232-3. and p. 218.

tinually to capsize their boats. Yet with wind and tide together they managed to travel at least a hundred miles a day; but they were obliged to reach the open sea by a different route to the Manamo River, by which they had first entered the Orinoko delta. Once more they passed through the country of the Tiwi-Tiwas, who had resorted to their houses in the high trees because the floods had covered the land. When they reached the mouth of this branch (the Makareo, which opens into the sea at quite a short distance from the south-west promontory of Trinidad) they were held up by another terrific storm and obliged to get in as close to the shore as possible, leaving the galley right out in the river because of the many sandbanks. The galley by this time was leaking and nearly swamped. Raleigh scarcely knew what to do, whether to leave the galley to her fate to find her way across to Trinidad as best she could in the daylight, or to stay by her. He feared in that case that the whole expedition might perish from wind, rain, waves, and the sheer misery of exposure to the elements. Therefore, with great dread, in the darkness, he put out to sea through the terrible surf of the river bar, "all being very sober and melancholy, one faintly cheering another to show courage." "But it pleased God that the next day by nine o'clock we descried the Island of Trinidad, and steering to the nearest part of it we kept the shore till we came to Curiapan (Punto de Gallos) where we found our ships at anchor, than which to us was never a more joyful sight."

From Trinidad his ships sailed to England without any misadventure, arriving there at the close of 1595. Thus the whole expedition from England, up the Orinoko to the foothills of Guiana and back to England, had been performed in the space of about nine months. The ac-

count which Raleigh immediately published of this voyage is written in a discursive and somewhat bombastic style, so that it is most difficult to trace the actual course of his journey. Yet he had wonderful powers of observation, and the information he collected about the geography, the ethnology, and the natural history of the country of this small part of the Orinoko basin which he visited is on the whole remarkably accurate, though he does not hesitate, in addition to the things he really heard of and discovered (like the Tapir, for example), to add to this region not a few beasts and birds which it did not possess, but which he assumed must be there. A good many of his geographical and tribal names can be recognized at the present day, and much of the information he collected from the Spaniards as to their doings and discoveries is singularly accurate. But he was not what one might call an heroic explorer; he did not accomplish feats anything like as wonderful as those of the Dutch who sailed up the Orinoko sixteen years before him. He admits he was a very bad marcher, and he bore discomfort with as keen a realization that it was discomfort as any sensitive traveller might do at the present day.

In 1595, whilst Raleigh was on the Orinoko, Captain (Sir) AMIAS PRESTON and Captain GEORGE SOMERS, "both valiant gentlemen and discreet commanders", set forward on a voyage to the West Indies "in two tall ships, the *Ascension* and the *Gift*". They were accompanied by a Captain Jones in the *Derling*<sup>1</sup> and Captain Prowse in the *Angel*. After plundering Madeira and Porto Santo, and the Canaries, they reached the Island of Dominica to refresh their sick men. Here the Indians came to them in dug-

<sup>1</sup> Probably the *Darling*, a London ship which voyaged to Guiana in the following year in the fleet that went out under Lawrence Keymis.

out canoes made of a whole tree, bringing plantains, pine-apples, and potatoes, and trafficked with them for hatchets, knives, and beads. Near the shore they found a natural hot bath, close to a cold river, and their sick men bathed in this hot water and soon recovered their health. Dominica is described as being a goodly island, mountainous and overgrown with woods.

Passing by Grenada, Testigos, and the Pearl Island of Margarita, they anchored off an islet called Coche. Here they captured a few Spaniards and negro slaves, together with a small quantity of pearls. Whilst fishing off this island for mullet they captured in their seine-net a crocodile, or perhaps more accurately a caiman. Then they set sail for Kumana, on the mainland of Venezuela. They were intercepted by two Dutch boats, the commanders of which, out of jealousy, sent warning to the Spaniards that the English were coming. However, arrived off Kumana, the Spaniards capitulated and offered a ransom to save their town from being burnt and destroyed. They told the Englishmen that all their goods of value (thanks to the advice they had received from the Dutch) had been sent into the mountains, and that therefore little or nothing would be gained by destroying the town wantonly, but if the English would agree to accept a reasonable ransom, they should receive that and a good store of provisions. So the English ships consented to the ransom and departed without landing any men, having obtained "some sides of bacon, some maize, and Guinea corn".

Next they took a fort without any resistance, near La Guayra (on the Venezuela coast), but only found it contained meal and wine. Having captured some Spanish prisoners, however, they obtained information about the great city of Sant' Iago de Leon. This place, it appeared,



having received warning, had prepared itself to receive the English attack and had made very strong barricades. But further information was elicited which showed that there was another means of approach, an extremely difficult path, only used by the native Amerindians. One of their Spanish prisoners offered to lead them along this way, and accordingly a party of English soldiers marched with their officers in Indian file through the woods "and over such high mountains that they had never before seen the like". The path was barricaded in various places with trees, which they were obliged to cut through, but they had brought carpenters with them for that purpose. The tops of the mountains were so extremely high and so steeply upright that many of the soldiers fainted by the way, and at first refused to go any farther, saying that their officers might kill them if they liked, but move they could not; so several of them had to be left behind lying on the ground. At length the top of the mountain was reached, and a stay was made to refresh the men, and to permit of most of the laggards catching up with them. During this time the party was drenched with the rain and the heavy mists. As soon as they descended from the highest altitudes the weather cleared and they were able to distinguish the town of Sant' Iago de Leon not far from them. Therefore they all stopped, cleaned and loaded their muskets, displayed their colours, and discharged a volley, to the dismay of the Spaniards. After this they marched on at a round pace. The enemy was in readiness outside the town to encounter them on horseback. This place where the Spanish cavalry was drawn up was a smooth field, without hedge, bush, or ditch, and with no obstructions except the watercourses. Strange to say, however, as they marched forward the Spanish cavalry fled, after one of

them had been slain, while not a single Englishman was touched with gunshot or arrow.

Thereafter the town was captured with no more resistance, but the English were bitterly disappointed at finding that the only plunder consisted of wine and iron implements, all the treasure having been conveyed away to the mountains. A few days afterwards a single Spaniard came to negotiate, who asked what the English intended to do with the town. Their leader, Amias Preston, replied that he would remain there for some time, and unless he received a ransom he would burn the town before his departure. The ransom fixed upon was 30,000 ducats (equivalent to about £15,000). The Spaniard demurred, but in the conversation that took place Preston asked him why so fair a city was not surrounded by strong walls. The messenger replied that it had been thought to be sufficiently walled from the outer world by the huge and high mountains, which were believed to be impassable to any but Indians. Before returning to his own quarters the Spaniard asked for a token to show that he really had spoken to the English general. Thereupon he was given an English shilling. But the Spaniard on his return would only rise to a ransom of 4000 ducats, "and more he would not give". Preston, thinking this a trivial sum to distribute amongst the whole party, refused it. And after waiting in vain for any further proposals, and having learnt from Indian prisoners that the Spaniards were only occupying him with these negotiations whilst they were sending in all directions for reinforcements, the Englishmen burnt Sant' Iago de Leon to the ground and marched away—not by the mountain road, but by the great beaten way, where, sure enough, they found the huge barricades their Spanish prisoners had told them of before they left

the seacoast, barricades which, defended by 100 men, might well have stopped 10,000 in those days.

Having regained their ship (which they loaded with hides and sarsaparilla, a poor cargo in place of the gold and silver they had anticipated) they set sail, and after some hesitation attacked and took the town of Coros. But this also contained nothing of any value; so it was burnt to the ground in vain spite. After this, disasters fell on the English fleet. One of the ships was blown away in a tempest and separated from her companions for a time; and when this was recovered the whole expedition sailed over to the Island of Hispaniola and anchored off the south coast of Haiti. Here a great sickness fell on the fleet, so that eighty men died from a form of dysentery. The English ships which had followed the fortunes of Amias Preston parted company with him, and by the time he reached the coast of Jamaica his fleet only consisted of his own ship and that of Captain Somers, and a small pinnace. Off Cuba they met with the expedition of Sir Walter Raleigh returning from his "discovery of Guiana" and his surprise of the Island of Trinidad. They designed to return home in his company, but, contrary winds having blown them apart, Preston and Somers found it necessary to sail back to England by way of Newfoundland.

At the end of January, 1596, Captain LAURENCE KEYMIS, who had been one of Raleigh's ship captains in the expedition of 1595, was sent back by him to prosecute further discoveries in that direction; in fact he left for Guiana only about two months after returning from Trinidad. He was furnished (probably entirely at Raleigh's expense) with two vessels: the *Darling* of London, and a small pinnace, the *Discoverer*. Keymis sailed in

the *Darling*; the little *Discoverer* (a boat perhaps of 12 to 15 tons) was commanded by a courageous sea dog of a captain, William Downe, and was lost sight of in the Bay of Biscay in foul weather. Keymis made for the Cape Verde Islands, and thence passed across the tropical Atlantic with a steady wind and smooth sea in twelve days to the coast of Guiana—almost as speedy a voyage as by an ordinary steamer. Unlike his patron, Raleigh, he actually did reach the coast of Guiana proper, to the east of the Orinoko basin. Here he found some of Raleigh's Amerindian servants and pilots settled, out of reach of Spanish malice, because, for some not very clear reason—perhaps uncertainty as to Portuguese claims—the Spaniards never made much attempt to occupy the Guiana coast eastward of the Orinoko delta. It is true that they had some five years previously sent a force thither to expel Dutch traders and settlers, but this force had afterwards returned to Trinidad.

Keymis entered into friendly relations with the coast tribes of Guiana Amerindians, and then passed on to the mouth of the Orinoko, which great river he attempted (out of somewhat slavish veneration for his patron) to rechristen the "Raleana"—a name which certainly did not take on. When emerging from the delta into the open sea, to his great surprise he encountered his little pinnace, the *Discoverer*. This small vessel, despite bad weather, had actually sailed all the way from England to the coast of Guiana, and had explored most of the Guiana rivers, searching for her larger consort. Eventually the *Discoverer* was piloted by Amerindians to the mouth of the Orinoko, to await Keymis's return from his explorations up country. The meeting between the two commanders was joyful, especially so on the part of Keymis, as the

## 176      Pioneers in Tropical America

*Discoverer* contained reserve supplies of provisions badly needed for the home voyage. But the gallant little pinnace had to be abandoned on the sandbanks off the Orinoko, for her rudder had received damages which could not be repaired. Accordingly, after removing her stores and men, she was set on fire, so that she might be of no use to the hated Spaniards. The *Darling* then sailed off on her solitary homeward voyage, calling first at the island of Tobago. This was found to be "fertile and plentiful of good things", but uninhabited by Amerindians, owing to the harassing attacks of the cannibal Caribs of Dominica. It was rumoured that the Spaniards were contemplating a settlement. As a matter of fact, Tobago never became Spanish, but was eventually settled by the Dutch, French, and Finns of Courland, and was ultimately acquired by Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

Keymis next proceeded to Saint Vincent, one of the Windward Isles. Here his men attempted to trade for tobacco with the Caribs, but found these cannibals scheming to lure them on shore so that they might be overcome, captured, and eaten, a fate which had just befallen "the whole company of a French ship". One trick of the cannibals was to receive their foreign visitors with a great show of courtesy and offer them very low stools to sit on. As the visitors sat down they were struck on the back of the neck and killed.

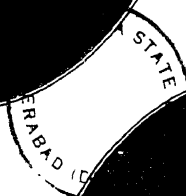
Various troubles and distractions prevented Raleigh for twenty-one years from prosecuting any farther his scheme of founding an English settlement on the Orinoko

<sup>1</sup> The Dutch had had their thoughts turned towards Guiana before the English, and, as noted on p. 89, had even attempted to attack the Spanish settlements on the Orinoko.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

Painted at the age of 34,  
probably by Federigo Zuccaro.

(From the portrait in the  
National Portrait Gallery.)



CAPTAIN WILLIAM DAMPIER

Painted by Thomas Murray.

(From the portrait in the  
National Portrait Gallery.)



or the coast of Guiana. He had fallen out with King James I in 1603, and had been tried for treason, sentenced to death, and relegated as a close prisoner to the Tower of London, there to await His Majesty's decision as to the date of his execution. Possibly King James did not intend him to die on the scaffold, but he was kept a prisoner for nearly thirteen years, partly to please and reassure Spain. James I desired to be on good terms with Spain (why, it is not very clear), and the Spanish Government entertained an exceedingly bitter and well-founded hatred of Raleigh for many injuries inflicted by him on her possessions across the seas, perhaps most of all for his treacherous and pitiless slaughter of the Spanish soldiers at Trinidad (see p. 150).

By bribing the uncles of Villiers, the new favourite of James, Raleigh was released from the Tower in 1616—though still not relieved from his sentence of death—and was permitted to make extensive preparations for a considerable expedition to Guiana, of which he was to take command. He had propounded a plan [based partly on information and samples of rock and earth collected for him by his zealous adherents among the sea captains,<sup>1</sup> and partly on wild guesses and optimistic beliefs derived from the perusal of Spanish books and letters on South America] of getting possession of Guiana proper, of the debatable region between the Orinoko and Brazil, occupied neither by Spaniards nor Portuguese, and then finding and working mines of gold and silver in the interior. The greed of James I was attracted by this idea of becoming the master of a region of gold mines, and on the assurance of Raleigh that he would not be transgressing existing Spanish

<sup>1</sup> At intervals he contrived to subsidize masters of ships to call off the coast of Guiana, and keep up relations with the Amerindians. One native of Guiana lived with him two years in the Tower.



rights, and that he—Raleigh—would avoid any acts of piracy or enmity against the Spaniards, the king duly commissioned him to be the leader of this enterprise, though the seal placed on the commission and the manner in which it was given did not absolve Raleigh from the consequences of his previous acts, nor entirely precluded the ultimate carrying out of the death sentence. The Spanish ambassador was assured that if Raleigh again attacked the Spaniards after the manner of his exploits in Trinidad in 1595 he would, on his return, be hanged as a pirate. It should also be mentioned that the ambassador, noticing that Raleigh was preparing a powerful and warlike expedition, despite the king's assurances, offered, if he would merely proceed with two ships to Guiana and search peaceably for his theoretical gold mine, to obtain for him from the King of Spain a safe convoy there and back, and permission to bring away all the gold he could find. The ambassador (Gondomar) offered to remain in England as a hostage for Raleigh's safety.

Sir Walter Raleigh, however, refused this very fair proposal, and, after some delays, left the coast of Ireland on 19 August, 1617, with a fleet of fourteen vessels, large and small, and about 800 officers and men. Amongst those who went with him was his eldest son, Walter, a young man of about twenty-three years of age, and Captain Laurence Keymis, who had been with him on the *Orinoko* in 1595, and had himself, on behalf of Raleigh, explored the coasts and rivers of Guiana in 1596. But from the first this expedition was doomed to disaster. Some malady or combination of infectious diseases attacked the ships of the fleet soon after they got into the Equatorial Zone of the Atlantic, and Raleigh's journal of the voyage from the Cape Verde Islands to the Guiana coast notes daily the

deaths amongst officers and men. So that before the fleet reached Cape Oyapoko, on the boundary between Guiana and Brazil,<sup>1</sup> the expedition was considerably weakened.

Nevertheless, why Raleigh did not—having got there and found no Spaniards, perhaps only a few Dutchmen, in his way—proceed to occupy and colonize Guiana, and by ascending its numerous rivers reach the mountains of the interior which really were gold bearing, is incomprehensible. Instead of doing so he was for ever hankering after the Orinoko and Trinidad. He dispatched Keymis with five ships and 400 men to ascend the Orinoko delta and main stream, and attack the newly founded Spanish settlement of San Tomas de Guayana, on the south bank of the Orinoko, halfway between the beginning of the Delta and the Karoni confluence. The English captured the town after very stiff fighting, in which they lost perhaps twenty men. Among the fallen was Raleigh's gallant young son, Walter. Keymis's expedition remained for twenty-six days in possession of San Tomas, during which time Keymis made futile efforts to discover the much-talked-of mine. But the Spaniards received reinforcements as well as Indian allies, and, threatened with destruction, the English force abandoned San Tomas on 29 January, 1618, and made for Trinidad. Raleigh himself had with the rest of the fleet anchored inside the "Serpent's Mouth", off Cape

<sup>1</sup>Cape Oyapoko (Raleigh's "Wiapoco"), at the mouth of the River Oyapok, is now known as Cape Orange. It was named "Cape Cecil" by the somewhat servile Captain Keymis at the time he rechristened the Orinoko "Raleana", with the hope that he might thus conciliate the dour and disagreeable Secretary of State of Queen Elizabeth and James I (Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury). Cecil detested Raleigh, even in Queen Elizabeth's time, and was his principal foe at the Court of James I. He seems to have taken no notice of the attention of having a cape of Guiana named after him. The region about Cape Oyapoko had been once or twice colonized by English settlers, at Raleigh's instigation, between 1596 and 1608, but they always abandoned the country on account of its unhealthiness. Subsequently the French took over this region and founded near here their colony of Cayenne, which is now an important French possession.

Kuriapan (south-west point of Trinidad). When he received the news of the complete failure of this wanton and unprovoked attack on the possessions of a foreign power at peace with England he realized that he was irretrievably ruined. He was further cut to the heart at the loss of his son, and overwhelmed his old friend and servant, Keymis, with such bitter reproaches and scathing opprobrium that the latter went from his presence and committed suicide, an act which brought Raleigh farther into dislike amongst his already disheartened and mutinous followers. Some feeble proposition had previously been forward for attacking and taking possession of Trinidad, only to be rejected, as was likewise Raleigh's proposal to lie in wait for the Spanish treasure ships sailing from the coast of Mexico to Spain. Meantime Raleigh's fleet had proceeded as far north as Newfoundland to recruit, and here, after the threat of a mutiny on the part of officers and men, he decided to return forthwith to England and submit to his inevitable fate, surrendering himself to the king's officers at Plymouth. With very little delay he was executed at the Tower under his old sentence of 1603, on 29 October, 1618.

The news of his doings had reached Europe long before his fleet returned, and the Spanish ambassador demanded an audience from the timid, vacillating James, promising to say all he had to say "with one word". He was admitted to the royal presence and advanced, beside himself with anger, to the seated king, shouting, "Piratas, piratas, piratas!"

Pirates indeed were Raleigh, Drake, Hawkins, Amias Preston, Oxenham and many another English pioneer in the West Indies and on the coasts of the Spanish Main; pirates also were the sturdy Dutchmen who now—at the

beginning of the seventeenth century — began to attack the Spaniards on the Orinoko, the Portuguese in Brazil, and to acquire by force of arms and settlement that very Guiana on which Raleigh—with a strange instinct, based more on inspirational foresight than on exact knowledge—had set his heart. Pirates were swarming over the Atlantic from the ports of northern and western France to attack the Spanish possessions in the West Indies and on the coasts of the Caribbean Sea. But iniquitous as their proceedings often were, they were actuated by a sense of rude justice, a demand for fair play. The Spanish and Portuguese crowns were on the head of one monarch. That ruler over the Iberian peninsula, over half of Italy, over the Netherlands claimed, fortified by the Pope's Bull, that nearly all the coasts of Africa, of Southern Asia and Malaysia, and of the New World were to be exclusively reserved for the privileged commerce of such associations and royal monopolies in the Netherlands, Spain, and Portugal as held the royal license. These pirates of north-western Europe, in their lawless attacks on Spanish America and Portuguese Africa and Malaysia, enlisted the sympathies of all the civilized States of Europe not under the heel of Spain, and even found secret sympathizers and helpers amongst the Spanish and Portuguese settlers across the seas, especially in the succeeding seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. For as these grew in numbers they waxed impatient at the intolerable fetters imposed on their trade and production by the home Government, which thought absolutely nothing of the enrichment and improvement of Spain or Portugal, but everything of the enrichment of the Sovereign and of his often unworthy favourites and ministers.

As to Guiana, to some extent Raleigh's dreams and

## 182      Pioneers in Tropical America

anticipations have been realized. Thanks to him the attention of the British became riveted on this land; English settlements on the coast continued down to 1667, and although other distractions and occasional fits of indifference restrained the action of British administrations for a time, yet the acquisition of at any rate some portion of Guiana became, towards the close of the eighteenth century, an article in the national policy. This determination arose partly from the lack of men and money in Holland to develop Guiana, which obliged the Dutch Company to engage Scotchmen and Englishmen in their service and to open the country to the settlement of British planters. At the same time the French, who had formed settlements in eastern Guiana early in the seventeenth century, desired to add to them Dutch Guiana and a portion of Brazil; in fact one of Napoleon's projects at the very commencement of the nineteenth century was to enlarge Guiana into a mighty French empire over the basin of the Orinoko and northern Brazil. Great Britain already in 1796 had occupied Dutch Guiana, and in 1814 obtained (as a set-off against money due from the Dutch Government) the cession of what we now know as British Guiana. This is a territory which by degrees — and largely owing to the work of SIR ROBERT SCHOMBURGK, one of the greatest among British colonial pioneers—has grown into a splendid possession of 90,277 square miles, occupying some of the gold- and diamond-bearing districts hankered after by Raleigh.

## CHAPTER VII

### Pirates and Buccaneers

THE Dutch, as Spanish subjects (usually under the name of "Flemings"), had been trading with the West Indies as early as 1542, and by 1580 had made their first attempts to settle on the coast of Guiana. They had gained sufficient knowledge of the lucrative possibilities of America to be unwilling to surrender the chances of making a fortune there when their rebellion against Philip II cancelled their privileges as Spanish subjects. The French Protestants, moreover, laughed to scorn the pretensions of the Pope to allot the waste places of the world as he pleased to the Spanish and Portuguese monarchs, and began in the middle of the sixteenth century to examine the coasts of Florida, the outlying West India Islands, and, above all, Brazil. Practically they founded the existing town of Rio de Janeiro, though they were driven out by the Portuguese, who in turn adopted that place as the capital of Brazil. But it was on the small islands of the Lesser Antilles that the French, English, and Dutch really concentrated their efforts when they had been driven off the mainland of America by the assertion of Spanish and Portuguese power. Guiana also, like the Windward Islands, Barbados, and Tobago, was a kind of debatable land not distinctly claimed by either Spain or Portugal. Guiana was dominated by the Caribs, who had learnt to loathe the Spaniards, and therefore

encouraged (as is already related by Raleigh) the people of the northern nations to settle at the mouths of the principal Guiana rivers, the Oyapok, Maroni, Surinam, Kopenam, Korentain, Berbise, and Esekibo.<sup>1</sup> Here the English, Dutch, and French had made trading settlements of a more or less fleeting nature between 1580 and 1621.

In 1623-5 the little island of St. Christopher in the Leeward group had been colonized jointly by English and French settlers, while in 1625 English and Dutch seamen took possession of Santa Cruz. In the same year Barbados was colonized by the English alone, who also acquired Nevis, Barbuda, Antigua, and Montserrat, while the French settled on Guadalupe, Dominica (long defended by the Caribs), Martinique, and most of the Windward Islands (all of which last are now British). The Dutch, between 1625 and 1640, acquired a part of Santa Cruz, St. Eustatius, and Saba (northern Leeward Islands), the large island of Tobago, near Trinidad, besides Curaçao and the adjoining string of islets to the north of Venezuela. The English had taken possession of the distant Bermuda group<sup>2</sup> as early as 1612, and from Bermuda some of the Bahama Islands were colonized. The British settlements in the Bahama archipelago were several times attacked and destroyed by the Spaniards, no doubt because of their inconvenient proximity to Hispaniola and Cuba; but for some reason not easy to understand the Spaniards do not seem to have made sufficiently serious attempts to

<sup>1</sup> The original native pronunciation of this last river was Desekibo. All these names are spelt by me in accordance with the rules of geographical phonetic spelling and as they are pronounced.

<sup>2</sup> This little archipelago of limestone and coral islets was the "still vexed Bermoothes" of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, a name derived from their Spanish discoverer, Juan Bermudez. Shakespeare's play of the *Tempest* derives many of its exquisite descriptions of scenery and its allusions to savages from the contemporary reports of the Elizabethan period.

oust the English, French, or Dutch (and later on, the Danes) from the possession of the long string of the Lesser Antilles, or from Tobago or Curaçao; though they must have realized that the possession of these islands by their hated rivals and unwearied enemies must be the most serious menace possible to the Spanish monopoly of the New World.

It is true that in 1629 a Spanish fleet attacked and scattered the joint English and French colony of St. Christopher (commonly known as St. Kitts, a small island in the Leeward group). On this occasion a few of the English survivors fled to the mountains of the interior and ultimately built up their colony anew; others took refuge with the buccaneers of Haiti and returned to St. Christopher later. A few joined the two shiploads of Puritans sent out of England by the Earl of Warwick on a bold venture, the colonization of Providence Island. This was a little island, an islet, some rocks and reefs forming a group in the Caribbean Sea, about 160 miles due east from the coast of Nicaragua, but within range of the canoe voyages of the Mosquito Indians.<sup>1</sup> Other

<sup>1</sup> Providence Island, now almost forgotten and uninhabited (it is usually called Santa Catalina, and belongs to the Panamá republic), played such an important part in the history of the pioneers of British colonization in the West Indies that its origins deserve a special note of explanation. In 1630 Charles I had chartered a Company of Adventurers, founded by the Earl of Warwick and John Pym, for the purposes of planting and colonizing the Islands of Providence and Henrietta, &c. Who had drawn the attention of the English to these inconspicuous islands of the Caribbean Sea, 150 miles or more from the nearest land (Nicaragua), is unknown, owing to the absence of records. But no doubt some bold sea captain such as Blewfields (who made them his headquarters) had found that the little group of two islands—Providence and Henrietta—lay at a convenient proximity to the track of the great Spanish galleons sailing to and from Panamá, and temptingly easy to capture and plunder. At any rate the occupancy of Providence Island by the English pirates became so vexatious to the Spaniards that in 1641 a strong expedition was sent thither from Panamá, which captured the two islands and garrisoned them. The English settlers were, however, allowed to depart from the larger island. Most of them resorted to the Bahama Islands, where they laid the foundations of British colonization in this Lucayan archipelago, beginning at



parties of English had settled on the comparatively large island of Santa Cruz (now a Danish possession), which lies to the south-east of Porto Rico. Here they prospered, but no doubt made themselves a source of anxiety or annoyance to the Spaniards in Porto Rico. At any rate in 1650 a Spanish force invaded Santa Cruz, killed more than 100 of the English colonists, including the Governor, and burnt and pillaged the plantations. The English abandoned Santa Cruz, but those who escaped the fury of the Spanish attack reinforced the settlers on other West India islands, and determined, more bitterly than ever, to carry the war into the homes of the Spaniards when they got an opportunity. The desire for revenge on Spain had already led to several daring descents on Jamaica; of which the most successful, undertaken in 1643 by Leeward Islands men, commanded by William Jackson, revealed the weakness of the Spanish hold over this island. Other piratical attacks on Spanish towns in Porto Rico, Hispaniola, Cuba, and on the east coast of Central America had been followed—without a formal declaration of war—in 1655, by the dispatch on the part of Oliver Cromwell's Government of a fleet and army to avenge the Spanish destruction of the Santa Cruz settlement and seize, as compensation, some considerable Spanish possession in the Caribbean Sea. Hispaniola was the prize coveted by Cromwell, but his armada failed to capture the old town of Santo Domingo on the south coast of that large island. The British fleet, with its army of 9000 men (partly reinforced by furious English colonists from St. Christopher and Santa Cruz), made an easy conquest of Jamaica instead.

Eleuthera Island in 1646, and making their headquarters at "New Providence Island" in 1666. The administrative capital of the Bahamas is still in New Providence Island.

Jamaica, as soon as its occupation had been completed by the English in 1658, proved to be a most convenient basis in the West Indies from which English seamen could direct their war against the Spanish colonies and shipping. And hither came many of the pirate captains from Barbados and from Tortuga, who had begun to find the Dutch West India Islands no longer safe as a base and a market for their stolen wares, since the English war with Holland in 1652-4. The French, also, who frequented the islands off the coast of Haiti in increasing numbers, were treacherous associates, whose interests—political, commercial, and religious—gradually diverged from those of the English.

It was, however, in close association with the French ships from Normandy and Brittany that the English adventurers of the early seventeenth century first practised organized piracy in the West Indies. These lawless men, with whom were often joined Irishmen, Dutchmen, and Germans, were at first known as "Buccaneers", and established their headquarters on the island of Tortuga, off the north coast of Hispaniola, also the island of Vache or Vaca, near the south-western promontory of what we now call Haiti. The English and French seamen-adventurers had early realized the practical abandonment of northern and western Hispaniola by the Spaniards. The gold mines of the interior had proved disappointing, the native Americans had almost died out from disease and hard work, and the Spaniards were far more interested in the silver mines of Peru, Bolivia, and Mexico. But the cattle and the swine which they had landed at one time and another in eastern Hispaniola had multiplied at an extraordinary rate, their only enemies being the wild dogs, which were equally descended from Spanish importations. Turtle or

Tortuga Island, off the north coast of the land the natives called Haiti, was pitched upon (about 1625-9) as a convenient place of settlement where the French and English hunters of wild cattle might expect to escape the observation of the Spanish ships; especially if they confined their camps or villages to the south side of the island, whence a few hours' sail would take them to the uninhabited forests and mountains of Haiti. Their numbers were added to by the English colonists who fled thither from St. Christopher, Santa Cruz, and Providence Island before the attacks of the Spaniards; while the Dutch seamen from the Leeward Islands and Curaçao came there to buy hides, tallow, and cured meat.

From this cured meat arose the nickname of "buccaneer". The Caribs of the West Indies, before they died out, had taught the European seamen how to smoke and cure strips of flesh (it is to be feared that their own experience in this respect was connected mainly with human flesh) on wooden frameworks which they called in their own language *bukan*. The European successors of the Caribs who smoked and cured in the hot sun the beef and pork<sup>1</sup> obtained from the Haitian forests were called by the French *Boucaniers*, which the English converted into "Buccaneers". The Dutch, however, as these Buccaneers became more remarkable for their piracy than their flesh-curing, styled them *Vlijbooters*, or men darting about in these West Indian seas in fast sailing boats (flying-boaters). From this term arose the English *Freebooter* and the French *Flibustier*. [Another derivation is from the Dutch *Vrijbuiter*—"free plunderer".]

<sup>1</sup> The meat was cut into long strips, laid upon a grate or hurdle constructed of green wood, and dried over a slow fire of logs, which was fed with the bones, fat, and trimmings of the hide of the slaughtered ox or pig. By this means an excellent flavour was imparted to the meat, and a fine red colour

The life of the buccaneer in early days was a rude one. He and his serfs or apprentices roamed the woods of Haiti by day, with dogs trained to run down the cattle and wild swine. These beasts were brought to bay by the dogs and dispatched with pikes or muskets. The hunters either slept at night under the shelter of trees or rigged up a rude shed of sticks and foliage, called by the Arawak names of *ajupa* or *barbakoa*. But simple as their accoutrements were they seldom travelled without some kind of mosquito net, as the mosquitoes in these regions at night were almost unendurable. Their dress was of the simplest: long loose breeches, and over them a blouse or shirt, both made of coarse linen, and usually stained black and made shiny by the blood and grease of the slaughtered bullocks. The blouse was confined round the waist by a belt of ox hide with the hair on, and thrust into this belt were three or four large knives on the one side and on the other a pouch for powder and shot. The men were shod with rough boots of ox hide made like the *veldschoon* of South Africa. A cap with a short pointed brim, to shield the eyes, protected the head. At dawn the hunter and his companions arose from their sleep and started out fasting to seek for their prey, not stopping to eat or rest until they had killed and skinned as many oxen or swine as there were persons in the company. When the tale of these was complete the head of the band, or "master buccaneer" broke the marrow bones of an ox and made a meal for himself and his followers out of the marrow. They skinned the beasts as they lay and before a return was made to the temporary settlement at night; when they would eat a good square meal off the meat they had carried back with them. The next few days, if the chase had been successful, were spent in drying the meat and preparing

the hides. After about six months of this life, and a sufficient quantity of dried meat and hides had been got together, the buccaneers would return to Tortuga, or some other settlement on the north coast of Hispaniola, and dispose of their skins and meat for brandy, cloth, guns, powder, and possibly cash; spending, however, a good deal of their profits on every kind of excess, till the money was all gone, after which they resumed their hunting life.

The buccaneers had neither wives nor children, at any rate recognized no marital tie and no parental obligation. Generally they went about in couples, with a number of apprentices<sup>1</sup> or semi-slaves, boys or young men sold as convicts, or lured from France or England under false pretences. If one of the partners in these buccaneer couples died, the other inherited all his goods. When they fell out with each other (usually a strong friendship united partner with partner) they settled their quarrels by terrible duels with the knife; but a rude amount of law was administered amongst them according to a rough code which they called the Customs of the Coast, just as they often called themselves the People of the Coast. They were by no means without religion, especially the French, and sometimes maintained chaplains who performed mass on occasions, while they not infrequently gave largely from their booty to religious foundations, even to the Spanish churches of the towns they plundered.

<sup>1</sup> These oft-mentioned apprentices, who played such a part in colonizing the British West Indies, were derived, from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, from all persons who were arrested in England and Scotland as rogues and vagabonds, or who were idlers, and without means of livelihood and refusing to work; felons convicted in town and country, who instead of being executed in the barbarous manner of those days were reprieved for transportation to the West Indies; also all political and war prisoners of Scotland and Ireland, such as the Scotch captured after the battles of Dunbar and Worcester, and the Irish prisoners after the battles

Gradually, as time went on, the French and English buccaneers in Tortuga (who had to resist and repel many a Spanish attack from Santo Domingo or from Cuba) quarrelled; and the English finally left the French in possession, removing their headquarters to Jamaica or Honduras, if they were pirates or smugglers, or to Barbados or the Leeward Islands, if they preferred to become sugar planters, with the aid of negro slaves. Some pursued turtle and collected pearls on the islands, islets, and cays off the east coast of Central America. Others of the English buccaneers, as will be seen later, crossed over to the mainland of Central America, where they cut billets of logwood; those who preferred the more dangerous career of a pirate call themselves "privateers", and, with or without a letter-of-marque from an English governor of Jamaica or the English Admiralty at home, attacked and plundered Spanish ships and towns whenever they were strong enough to do so. Meantime, the French occupancy of Tortuga, which the Spaniards in the long run proved unable to uproot, developed into the remarkable colony of Haiti. This acquisition of Haiti for France was mainly due to the admirable work of Bertrand d'Oléron (1665-75), who governed the conquests of the buccaneers for the French West India Company. Haiti, with the aid of a million negroes or so, became in the next hundred years the wealthiest and most splendid possession in the West Indies, and continued to increase in output of coffee and sugar until, at the close of the eighteenth century, it was lost to France for ever by a great negro rebellion. The increase of French hold over the West Indies in the second half of the seventeenth century was partly due to

of Oliver Cromwell and William III, besides many of the Jacobites in the Scotch risings of 1715 and 1745.

the daring raids on Spaniards and Dutch by the French pirates, Jean-David Nau of Olon and Michel le Basque from western France.

The war which broke out between English and Dutch in 1652-4 and 1665-7, and the ever-simmering condition of unacknowledged warfare with the Spaniard, developed the English buccaneers of the last half of the seventeenth century into a great pirate fleet. Any bold or venturesome man who wished to attain fortune by rapid means would come out from England with a small vessel, attack the Spaniards, the Dutch, or the Portuguese, with or without a license, occasionally lose his life, his limbs, or his health in the venture, perhaps be captured and sent to years of living death in the mines of Mexico; yet ever and again he and his companions would make huge fortunes out of plundered towns and treasure ships. A very few passed into the English navy and died members of some knightly order and distinguished servants of the state, or retired to ease and respectability in the west of England, laying the foundations there of some of the most aristocratic families of the present day.

Captain WILLIS, who, driven out of Tortuga Island, crossed over to the northern Honduras coast and established himself on the Belize River, thus unconsciously founding the capital of British Honduras; William Goodson, who sacked Santa Marta and Rio de la Hacha (in north-eastern Colombia); CHRISTOPHER MYNGS, who plundered the Venezuelan coast of £300,000; Elias Watts, who ruled Tortuga; Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Morgan, who kept the Dutch out of St. Eustatius and Saba; Captains Robert Searle and Stedman, who captured Tobago from the Dutch; Captain BLEWFIELDS, who gave his name to the

port of southern Nicaragua; Captain Edward Mansfield, who ravaged the cities of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, were all famous—or infamous, according to the point of view—privateers of the middle seventeenth century. But none among the English buccaneers was so remarkable for his dare-devil exploits, his cruelty, the sum total of his gains, or the damage he inflicted on the Spaniard, as HENRY MORGAN. This man, though said to have been born in Bristol, about 1635, was probably, like the other West Indian Morgans, of Welsh blood. An uncle, Colonel Edward Morgan, had been deputy-governor of Barbados, and had been sent by the Governor of Jamaica (Sir Thomas Modyford), in 1664, with ten ships manned by 500 “reformed prisoners” (i.e. pirates), to attack the Dutch West India Islands. Edward Morgan captured St. Eustatius by an assault of great daring, and might have robbed the Dutch of all their West Indian possessions, but that after every success his pirate soldiers wished to divide the spoil, and were very resentful of discipline.<sup>1</sup>

His nephew, Henry, is said to have been kidnapped at Bristol in his teens and sold as a servant to a planter in Barbados. Here he served his three years, and then made his way to Jamaica, where he joined the buccaneers as a recruit. By the age of thirty-three (in 1668) he had become the most noteworthy among the privateer captains of the West Indies. He attained this pre-eminence by the part he played (with two other captains) in a descent on the Campeche coast of the Yucatan peninsula in the year 1665, on which occasion he and his companions (110 men in all) marched some 300 miles overland and captured and plundered the town, Villa de Mosa. The Mexican Spaniards were simply no match in resolution or bravery

<sup>1</sup> His conquests were subsequently defended by the unrelated Thomas Morgan.



for these Jamaica pirates, though greatly exceeding them in numbers. Conveying their booty in captured vessels and canoes, they made for the Island of Ruatan in the Bay of Honduras, where they rested and obtained fresh water; after that they passed down along the Mosquito coast, destroying every Spanish settlement that was visible, until they reached the San Juan River in Nicaragua. This they ascended in canoes, and emerged on the waters of Lake Nicaragua. The shores of this lake seemed to the Jamaica pirates a veritable paradise, with a cool and wholesome air, green pastures, and broad park-like lands dotted with horses and cattle and surrounded by a great circle of blue mountains. Hiding by day amongst the numerous islands, and paddling their canoes through the night, they at length reached the city of Grenada, marched into the central square, overturned eighteen cannon, seized the magazine of gunpowder, captured and imprisoned in the cathedral 300 of the hastily awakened citizens, whom they kept there as hostages, whilst two-thirds of their men plundered the town. After stowing away all the portable plunder in their canoes, and scuttling all the other boats and canoes which might have pursued them, Morgan and his comrades released their 300 hostages and then started back to the seacoast. They had been, however, accompanied on this expedition by about 1000 Amerindian allies, people who longed for some means of revenging themselves on the Spaniards. These natives would have liked to slaughter the hostages, especially those of them that were priests and friars. But the English prevented their committing any barbarities, and had the honesty to tell them that, as there was no intention of permanently holding this country for Great Britain, their allies had better do nothing that would

bring down on them the revenge of the Spaniards after the departure of the buccaneers.

At this time Providence Island, some distance out at sea from the coast of Nicaragua, had again been garrisoned by the English, and served as a most useful outpost for the buccaneers. Consequently, after the raid of the three captains, the President of Panamá, who was a vigorous type of Spaniard, resolved to recapture this island group. He marched across the isthmus quickly to Porto Bello, and there seized a well-armed English ship which was lying at anchor in this harbour under a license to trade in slaves, having just come over from the west coast of Africa. The President placed 350 Spanish soldiers on board and sent the vessel over to Cartagena, on the coast of Colombia, to the Governor of New Grenada. This officer furnished several other vessels and some more soldiers, and the united fleet then sailed across to Providence Island, where the English were summoned to surrender. A refusal was at first given; the English fort was at once besieged, and, being manned by only sixty to seventy men, capitulated. It was said that its garrison yielded to the Spaniards on the latter agreeing to send their prisoners in a ship over to Jamaica. This story may not have been true, though the Spaniards, like the English, stuck at nothing in the way of deceit when warring with their enemies. As soon as the English had laid down their arms they were made prisoners and were carried over to Porto Bello, where all of them except the three principal officers were treated with great cruelty. Thirty-three were chained to the ground in a dungeon which was only 12 feet by 10 feet. When this kind of imprisonment had broken their spirit, they were forced to work in the harbour, standing in water from five in

the morning till seven at night, the Spaniards boasting that one Englishman was made to do more work than three negroes. When, however, they collapsed from weakness, want of food and sleep, they were knocked down and so beaten with cudgels that several of them died. They were practically naked, their backs were blistered with the sun, their heads scorched, their necks, shoulders and hands raw with carrying stones and mortar, their feet chopped, and their legs bruised and battered with the irons, "their bodies actually mortifying and rotting". Probably before long the whole of them perished. The three officers of the garrison were put in irons and kept in a dungeon at Panamá seventeen months before they were released. It will be seen from this incident, therefore, that the Spaniards sometimes got home in their counter reprisals.<sup>1</sup>

Yet such reprisals always brought about revenges on the part of the buccaneers that were still more terrible. Although a treaty was being negotiated between Spain and Britain in 1667, no definite orders were sent out by the Government of Charles II to bring resolutely to a close these piratical attacks on Spanish possessions, and the capture of Providence Island was about to be revenged by Henry Morgan, who had returned from

<sup>1</sup>In the seventeenth century Spaniards sometimes sold the English officers who became their prisoners as slaves or servants to Spanish tradesmen. One such, a captain of good social standing, whose friends would have been only too willing to have ransomed him for a large sum, was employed for years in one of the towns of Central America, trailing about the streets with a log chained to his leg and a bread basket at his back, selling loaves for the Spanish baker who had become his master. At first, and in fact throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Spaniards were horribly cruel to the French, Dutch, and English prisoners, cutting off their noses and ears, exposing them, bleeding with wounds and naked, to the attacks of flies and ants, and inventing still more ingenious tortures. In all these practices they were soon imitated and outdone by the buccaneers. Yet after the middle of the seventeenth century the Spaniards became more kindly disposed, and finally behaved better to their war captives than did the English.

sacking Puerto Principe, on the north coast of Cuba, and carrying off 1000 head of cattle. The Spaniards being reported to the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Thomas Modyford, as planning an attack from Yucatan and Cuba on Jamaica, Modyford commissioned Henry Morgan in 1668 to get together all the privateer ships he could find and deal a counter blow which might dishearten the Spaniards from any such enterprise. Morgan proposed to attack Porto Bello, on the Panamá Isthmus, but the French pirates of Haiti—his associates in previous enterprises—were daunted by the boldness of his plans and refused to join him. He embarked on this raid, therefore, with English freebooters only, four to five hundred in number.

Porto Bello (Puerto Bello in Spanish spelling) was situated not many miles to the east of the modern Colon (the town which was founded in 1850, when an American company made the railway across the Isthmus of Panamá). Porto Bello had become the successor of Nombre de Dios, and in 1668 was equivalent to the Colon of to-day, in that it was the Atlantic port from which all the treasure and the produce of Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Colombia were shipped to Europe. Panamá, on the Pacific side of the isthmus, was the principal seat of government in this direction, and the depot which received and transmitted the commerce and treasure of the Pacific coast of South America. Immense numbers of vessels were kept at Panamá for carrying goods and passengers, and were sent backwards and forwards to Porto Bello. The Spaniards also made use of the River Chagres for water transport halfway across the isthmus, and had a fortified town at its mouth on the Atlantic coast.

The entrance to the large harbour of Porto Bello was narrow and secured by two forts. The town on the land-

ward side of the great bay had no defences. Morgan's men therefore rowed some distance up a neighbouring river in boats and canoes. Morgan had left just enough sailors in his nine ships to bring them round the next day to the harbour of Porto Bello. Landing from the riverside the privateers marched inland to the landward gates of the city, being guided by one of their companions who had formerly been a prisoner of the Spaniards. This man, with a few others of the party, managed very cleverly to pounce on the sentry, and prevented him from giving any warning with his musket or voice, gagging him, tying his hands, and bringing him to Captain Morgan, who, by means of threats, obtained much information from him about the disposition of the Spanish forces, and carried the man away as a hostage and a guide. Thus they surrounded one of the city forts and demanded its surrender, with terrible threats. The officer and men in this fort, though they yielded, were nevertheless cut to pieces by the ruthless pirates, "so as to strike a terror into the rest of the city". In the case of another fort, the soldiers were pushed, as prisoners, into one room, where they were fastened up. The fort and the imprisoned Spaniards were then blown up with captured barrels of gunpowder. Before the dismay created by this episode could be dissipated, the pirates were in the city, which apparently offered no further resistance. Morgan detailed a party of his men to raid the monasteries and convents, and remove from them as many religious men and women as they could find. The governor of the town, not being able to get any assistance from its citizens, retired with his soldiers into one of the few uncaptured forts, and thence directed an artillery fire on the pirate bands; but these, undaunted, aimed their musketry fire

“at the mouths of the guns”, and, shooting with great dexterity, killed not a few of the Spanish artillerymen. For six hours the duel between the governor and the pirates continued furiously; the latter were getting exhausted and had lost a number of men. Morgan therefore resolved to try the effect of fireballs or hand grenades, with which he endeavoured to explode or burn the wooden gates of the fort. But the Spaniards defeated this by hurling quantities of stones at the pirates every time they approached, or gunpowder, which exploded in the midst of the attacking parties. Morgan at last began to despair of the whole success of the enterprise, when he saw that one of his bands had captured a minor fort of the city and hoisted the English colours on it. He therefore adopted the following scheme. The priests, monks, and nuns whom he had collected from the religious houses were compelled by threats of force to lay hold of ten or twelve ladders and fix them against the walls of the big fort that offered the most obstinate resistance. But the governor paid no heed to this rather dastardly procedure, and did not hesitate to order his men to attack the wretched monks and nuns and kill them before they could fix the ladders. However, some of the ladders were set against the walls, and up these daring pirates mounted with the valour of desperation, having fireballs in their hands and earthen pots full of powder, which they then hurled at the Spaniards from the top of the walls. The Spaniards gave in and threw down their arms, asking only for their lives, all but the brave governor, who continued fighting, though constantly offered quarter. They endeavoured in vain to take him prisoner, and at last in their own defence were forced to kill him, “notwithstanding the cries and tears of his own

wife and daughter, who begged him to yield and save his life". After this the Englishmen huddled their prisoners—men and women—into rooms of the fort, with guards over them. The wounded were placed by themselves, and nothing was done to ease their pain or distress. The pirates forthwith gave themselves up to such debauchery and excess that if they had been attacked in the early hours of the next morning by fifty courageous men they might easily have been vanquished and destroyed.

However, no such attack was made, and having recovered their vigour the next day, they set to work to examine their prisoners and torture them with the utmost cruelty in order to force them to reveal the hiding places where they and others had stored their valuables. Many of their prisoners were thus killed, either not knowing and unable to satisfy their captors, or being too noble-minded to give away their fellow-citizens.

After remaining in Porto Bello for fifteen days, during which not a few of Morgan's men died from their excesses or from malarial fever, news came that the President or Governor of Panamá was on his way with an army to punish the raiders. Morgan therefore sent on board his ships all the booty his men had obtained and all the provisions he could gather together for his further voyage. He then required the city to pay him a ransom of 100,000 "pieces of eight" (equivalent to 100,000 dollars or £20,000) unless they wished their city to be burnt to ashes. The citizens sent messengers to the President of Panamá, who advanced to attack the pirates. But the pirates anticipated his coming, caught his force in an ambush, and put it to flight. Morgan exchanged messages of grim humour with the President of Panamá, the latter being really curious to know how the buccaneers, with no artillery, could have cap-

tured a strong city so bravely defended. This interchange of soldierly compliments ended in Morgan offering to pay a visit to the great city of Panamá, and show the President "how it was done", and the Spanish official promising him a warm reception if he did come.

The pirates resorted to a quiet part of the coast of Cuba for the division of their spoil. They had obtained from the sack of Porto Bello in actual money 250,000 dollars (£50,000), some valuable pearls and jewels, and an enormous amount of merchandise in cloth, linen, silk, &c. Each pirate seaman received about £60 as his share of booty, and the officers and captains proportionately more. Morgan himself probably cleared about £2000, a very large sum in those days.

Morgan next made Vache or Cow Island, off the southwestern peninsula of Haiti, his rendezvous for attacking the Spaniards in Cuba and Hispaniola. From this latter island he usually provisioned his ships with beef, returning for a while to the original functions of the buccaneer. In the spring of 1669 he descended with eight ships and four to five hundred men on the town of Maracaibo, at the head of a great lagoon on the coast of Venezuela—the very place which had inspired the first explorer, Ojeda, with the name of "little Venice". Morgan destroyed the fort at the entrance to the lake and captured the town. The flying Spaniards were pursued, brought back, and tortured in the cruellest way to make them confess where they had hidden their valuables. Three weeks later Morgan moved on to a place called Gibraltar, at the head of the lake, where for five weeks such of the inhabitants as fell into the clutches of the pirates were made to endure every imaginable torment at the hands of their cruel enemy. Loaded with booty, the pirates returned to Maracaibo, to learn that



three big Spanish ships were lying off the sea mouth of the lake, and that their landing parties had restored, manned, and armed with cannon the fort dismantled by Morgan two months before.<sup>1</sup>

It seemed in this way as if the unspeakable Englishman and his crews of murderers, ravishers, and plunderers were neatly bottled up, and would be made to pay with their lives for their horrible outrages on the possessions of Spain. No escape, apparently, was possible. And yet the wily scoundrel, after pretending to negotiate, and thus gaining time for cogitation, found the means of slipping out of the trap which the stupid Spaniards (as on many similar occasions in history) had overlooked. Morgan and his men constructed hastily an imitation man-of-war, which was really a fire ship. Sending on this vessel, manned by a few brave men (who no doubt afterwards jumped into the water and swam to other ships), ahead of the other ships of the pirate fleet, the little squadron steered straight towards the three big Spanish vessels lying at anchor just inside the lake. The men directing the course of the fire ship grappled her close up against the largest of the three Spanish vessels. This admiral's ship immediately caught fire. The men on board her nearest consort, in a state of panic, pulled up the anchor and ran their vessel aground; then set fire to her in case she should fall into English hands. So there remained only one Spanish ship to fight; and this, attacked by all the pirate crews, was quickly captured, nearly all her men and officers being murdered. A steersman, however, was picked up, and in return for his life informed the pirates that the flagship just set fire to contained 40,000 silver "pieces of eight". An immediate attempt was made to put out the flames and get at the

<sup>1</sup> This was the place now known as Altagracia.

treasure, of which quite one-half was recovered, either unspoilt or in the form of molten silver.

Morgan next returned to Maracaibo and refitted his prize ship, preparing her for sea to transport the booty he had got and intended to get; for he now had the impudence to demand from the crestfallen admiral of the three ships (who had taken refuge on shore from his burning vessel) a ransom for sparing the city of Maracaibo and the lives of its hostage citizens. He wrung from this officer 20,000 more dollars and 500 head of cattle. But the Spaniards still hoped to keep the pirates bottled up in Maracaibo lake until Spanish reinforcements could arrive, so they refused Morgan permission to pass out into the open sea past the fort, which had been repaired and garrisoned. Undismayed, he made everything ready, even to a division of his plunder amongst all the officers and crews of his fleet. Then he pretended to land a force to attack the fort on the landward side; and the Spaniards, taken in by this age-old manoeuvre, moved their big guns round in that direction. As the moon rose and the tide streamed seaward, Morgan's nine ships drifted down opposite the fort, and, suddenly spreading sail, passed out into the Caribbean Sea and so across to Jamaica. From this descent on the Venezuela coast Morgan's booty was considerable: about £70,000 in money, much jewellery and merchandise, and a number of negro and Indian slaves. Yet each pirate seaman only received about £30 as his share in the spoil.

Spain grew mad with anger at these assaults of the buccaneers, and word was sent to the authorities of the Indies to make war on the English everywhere. A few feeble reprisals did take place—usually attacks on unprotected Jamaican villages, where a few negro huts were burnt, or a small fishing vessel was captured, and the two or

three Englishmen on board were tortured, killed, sent to the quicksilver mines for life, or immured in the terrible dungeons of Cartagena. Absurdly enough, the pirates of Jamaica, when they heard of such proceedings, were shocked, distressed, even horrified and scandalized, scarcely seeming to realize that the Spaniards were far behind them in fiendish cruelty and relentlessness, as they likewise were in dare-devil bravery and cleverness of stratagem. The privateers clamoured to the Governor of Jamaica for leave to go out and take revenge for these comparatively trivial counter attacks, and this at a moment when English pirates had just plundered again the cities of southern Nicaragua. Sir Thomas Modyford affected to give in to public agitation, and decided to commission Morgan to take command over a great privateering fleet and army, which was to attack Spain in some vital part of her dominions. Morgan decided now to go to Panamá. This was no mere plundering raid of pirates, but a well-organized, disciplined expedition under commissioned officers of the Crown—a general, colonels, lieutenant-colonels, majors, and captains. But the rank and file were to get no regular pay, only a share in whatever loot was obtained.

Morgan's fleet of thirty-six vessels, with 1800 fighting men, left Haiti (where they had obtained several hundred French recruits) on 8 December, 1670, and first recaptured from the Spaniards the island of Providence, off Nicaragua. Then at the close of December the advance force, after desperate fighting, entered the fortified town of Chagres (since the destruction of Porto Bello the principal port on the Atlantic side of the Panamá Isthmus), and slaughtered nearly 300 of the Spanish garrison; these Spaniards, indeed, in their rage and hatred of "the English dogs", scorned to ask for quarter. The bravery of the English

and French pirates was extraordinary. They seemed to be possessed with the fighting fury of the old Norsemen or the Muhammadan fanatics of Afghanistan or the Sudan. One among many other instances may be quoted from Exquemelin, the historian of the buccaneers.<sup>1</sup> At the storming of Chagres one of the pirate soldiers was pierced by an arrow, which entered his back and came out at the side of the breast. The wounded man pulled the arrow out through his body; then, taking a little cotton wool he had about him, wound it round the arrow, and, placing the arrow in the muzzle of his musket, shot it back into the fortress. The cotton wool, being kindled by the gunpowder, was in a blaze as the arrow fell on the roofs of thatch within, and by this means fire was communicated to many of the buildings and to a store of gunpowder, causing such damage and consternation that the next day Chagres—or the ruins of it—were in the possession of the English, while of the Spanish fighting force only thirty were living and ten unwounded.

Morgan arrived soon afterwards, and, leaving a garrison behind to guard this important post, he started with a force of 1400 men for Panamá, conveying them—and his artillery—at first in boats and canoes up the River Chagres, which was navigable nearly halfway across the isthmus. When water transport was no longer possible (160 men were left behind to guard the boats on the Chagres) the army left the river and marched southward on Panamá. It took them about nine days to cross the isthmus and

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Olivier Exquemelin was probably a native by birth of Holland or Belgium, but entered the service of the French West India Company, and joined there the buccaneers on Tortuga Island. He remained with the buccaneers for six years, performing the functions of barber-surgeon. In this capacity he accompanied Morgan on most of his raids. Returning to Holland in 1674, he published, in Dutch, at Amsterdam a remarkably interesting book on *The American Sea Rovers*, which was soon translated into German, and later on into Spanish, English, and French.

come in sight of their goal, the rich city on the shores of the Pacific Ocean. They travelled very light and took almost no provisions with them, believing that by plundering Spanish settlements and Indian plantations they would have a sufficiency of food. But the Spaniards had had the precaution to destroy as far as possible all supplies. It was almost all the President of Panamá could do to hamper the advance of the English, for he had only a miserable garrison of some 1200 Spaniards, mulattoes, Negroes, and Indians, and not enough forces to go out and meet the invaders on the road. The Amerindian allies of the Spaniards attempted here and there to hold back the daredevil enemy, but scarcely inflicted any loss on him. The pirates ate fried scraps of leather and drank river water, and though they grumbled much, and were at times ill with hunger, fever, or indigestion, they staggered on until, on the ninth day, they saw before them the distant waters of the Pacific and the harbour of Panamá. In a valley not far from the city the Spaniards had, with incomprehensible carelessness, left a great herd of cattle grazing. The famished buccaneers flung themselves on these beasts, slaying and flaying the greater part of them, while some lit fires, and those that were practised butchers cut up the flesh into convenient-sized pieces, which were hastily roasted or broiled and devoured with ravenous hunger. During this satisfaction of appetite many of the pirates looked like ferocious cannibals, the blood from the meat running down their beards and dying their hands and clothes.

The President of Panamá sent out to meet them two squadrons of horsemen, four regiments of foot soldiers, and a number of Indians and Negroes,<sup>1</sup> whose rôle in

<sup>1</sup> The total number of the Spanish troops which came out to meet him on the plain

action was to drive against the pirate ranks a herd of one to two thousand fierce wild cattle, before which it was vainly hoped that these professional ox hunters would turn and flee. When Morgan's force, which perhaps numbered by this time a little more than 1200, saw the battle array of the Spanish army under the walls of Panamá they were dismayed, and many wished themselves back in Jamaica, and regretted their foolhardiness in joining Morgan. Nevertheless, their position being desperate, they resolved to fight resolutely and die, if need be, in battle. Morgan divided his little army into three bodies, and sent ahead, to skirmish, nearly 200 of his best marksmen.

The Spaniards, on their part, made an absurd disposition of cavalry and infantry. Their cavalry were to deploy on a meadow which was half-marsh. Consequently the horses slid about, floundered, and fell in their attempts to charge the oncoming English. The advance party of 200 musketeers did deadly execution by dropping on one knee and taking careful aim at the distracted horsemen; while the other companies of Englishmen attacked the motley Spanish infantry (many of whom were mulattoes and negroes, with little heart in the business) with such determination that they could not come to the rescue of the cavalry, most of whom were shot down. The attempt to drive the cattle on to the English proved futile; most of the bulls ran away in an opposite direction, and those that came near the English ranks were promptly turned into beef by volleys of bullets.

After two hours the Spaniards were defeated, with a

outside Panamá was computed by Morgan at 2700, in addition to which 200 soldiers and gunners remained to defend the city and work the big guns. But according to the President of Panamá his total forces did not exceed 1200.

loss of 600 men and many prisoners, and the next day the city of Panamá was taken after a furious cannonade from the Spanish guns, which accounted for the death of perhaps 100 of Morgan's men. Consequently, when the town was really in the possession of the pirates, they at first slew without mercy, being, however, more pitiless towards the unarmed priests and monks than the Spanish soldiers. Such Spaniards as escaped from slaughter, and the Negro slaves left behind, set fire to the town, which was built mostly of wood. A few hours after the entry of the English it was all consumed except a few churches, government buildings, and outlying villas. The most valuable church property, the Government treasure, and the jewellery of notable persons had, together with the nuns of the convents and women of distinction, been sent south in a big ship before the arrival of the buccaneers. And although Morgan dispatched other vessels in search of this galleon it had already sailed beyond their pursuit.

Strong parties of Morgan's soldiers raided the surrounding country, bringing in all the booty they could find and all the prisoners they could catch. Some of these were tortured to make them reveal hidden wealth, either their own or that of others. One poor wretch (a servant), who in the confusion of the assault on the town had donned his master's breeches—from the strings of which depended a silver key—could not or would not say where the soldiers might find the cabinet to which the key belonged. So they racked him and disjoined his arms; then twisted a cord round his forehead till his eyes were forced out of their sockets; hung him up and whipped him; cut off his nose and ears; singed his face with flaming straw; and finally ran him through the



PORTO BELLO: VIEW OF MODERN VILLAGE FROM OLD SPANISH FORT





body. Many prisoners, here and at other places on their route, they killed by cutting them to pieces, little by little, avoiding mortal wounds as long as possible. Women were burnt piecemeal to make them give information. Finally, when no more booty could be obtained from the ruined city, Morgan departed with his little army and 600 prisoners. These were Spanish men, women, and children whom he held to ransom, starving them purposely so that their misery from hunger and thirst might wring from them, or their escaped relations, larger ransoms.

Though recklessly brave and singularly adroit in war, Henry Morgan was very mean towards his followers, especially the ordinary seamen and private soldiers. He distrusted them profoundly, the more so that he was always ready to swindle them himself. When his expedition on its return journey had once more reached the navigable parts of the River Chagres, and therefore was assured of escape from the isthmus, he called up all his men—perhaps 1200 in number—and ordered them first to take a solemn oath that they had concealed nothing about them in the way of plunder, “not so much as the value of a sixpence”. This being done, he then appointed to every company of soldiers one searcher, who should publicly search each member of the company to see if he had sworn truly; and to take away somewhat from the shame of these proceedings he offered himself to be searched. The French pirates in his army objected most strongly to this procedure, but being in the minority were obliged to conform to his orders.

All the plunder finally deposited at the port of Chagres for distribution, prior to the departure of Morgan for Jamaica, is said to have amounted in money to about £70,000, besides much rich merchandise and valuable

jewellery.<sup>1</sup> Out of this total the private soldiers and seamen only received about £40 each in money or goods. According to the subsequent statements of the surgeon-general of Morgan's fleet the amount doled out in cash to each member of the rank and file was only £10! Seamen and soldiers alike loudly complained that Morgan and others among the captains and leaders had absorbed the greater part of the plunder. No provision whatever was made for the widows or children of those who had died on the expedition, and many who had advanced money for the fitting out of the fleet were never repaid a penny. Complaints to the Governor of Jamaica, Sir Thomas Modyford, were only met with an insolent refusal of justice, or worse, for Modyford was as bad a scoundrel as any of the pirates and privateers whom he launched on the high seas to attack Spanish commerce. So long as he got his commission, and something over, on the results of fortunate robberies, he would listen to no complaints against the pirate leaders. As to Morgan, once he had divided the booty with such large advantage to himself and his friends, he cared little what became of the rest of his army or the ships and sailors he had taken from Jamaica. He himself left Chagres with three ships in March, 1671.

On 31 May, 1671, the council of Jamaica passed a vote of thanks to Modyford for the manner in which he had conducted the Panamá expedition. Nevertheless England at first felt a little shamefaced over such outrageous proceedings, the more so as she had concluded with Spain a formal treaty of peace and commerce in July,

<sup>1</sup> The total loss sustained by the Spaniards in money, jewels, cattle, slaves, and trade goods, through Morgan's attack on the Panamá Isthmus, was computed by them at a value of 6,000,000 crowns—say £1,500,000.

1670. Modyford was replaced as Governor by Sir Thomas Lynch and sent to England for trial under arrest. He was, however, soon pardoned, and eventually returned to Jamaica. Morgan also was sent to England as a prisoner in 1672, but, instead of being punished, was appointed in 1674 deputy-governor of Jamaica, and was knighted by Charles II. He held this post in the Jamaica Government until 1683, when he was suspended from all his employments under the Crown owing to his outrageous conduct in supporting, openly or tacitly, the proceedings of his brother, Captain Charles Morgan—a pirate of the worst description—and sharing the carousings and debaucheries of his cousin, Colonel Byndlos, a dissolute, drunken ruffian. Nevertheless, in 1688, Henry Morgan was restored to his seat on the Jamaica Council, but fortunately for the honour of England he died a month afterwards.

Following on the treaty concluded at Madrid in 1670 the British Government no longer openly countenanced piracy in the seas of Tropical America. Due notice was sent to the privateers and buccaneers to desist from attacks on Spanish possessions, and an amnesty was offered to all past offenders who henceforth pursued honest courses. But it was nearly 100 years later before piracy completely came to an end in the West Indies and along the coasts of Spanish America and Brazil. In a review of Australasian pioneers we have noticed how Captain Cook in 1768 was received as a possible pirate by the authorities at Rio de Janeiro. The Spaniards, indeed, horrified to find that this attack by Morgan on Panamá could follow a peace solemnly concluded at Madrid, reposed no more faith in English protestations, and treated every English vessel they could catch off the American coast

as a pirate, though some of them were, at the worst, attempting a contraband trade—no other form of commerce except slave dealing being permissible with the Spanish colonies. Moreover, another source of trouble was beginning for Spain in Central America: the rush to obtain logwood. This fresh incentive to bold pioneers will be dealt with in the next chapter in connection with the adventures of William Dampier.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Dampier and the Logwood Cutters

THE great Bay of Honduras, with its numerous islands and inlets, and yet with an outer fringe of dangerous reefs—easily passed by small and cunningly steered craft, but repeatedly fatal to the pursuing big ships of the Spaniards; its quiet lagoons, narrow creeks, and river mouths screened from outside observation by dense growths of mangrove, manchineal, and palms began to attract adventurers of the buccaneering class at the beginning of the seventeenth century. At first they came there to prey on Spanish towns and shipping, and to spear turtle and capture cattle. English sailors in the early part of the seventeenth century were wrecked on the coast of Yucatan and received in a most friendly way by the Amerindians. Such of them as eventually returned to the haunts of the buccaneers on the north and south coasts of Haiti told of the numbers of wild oxen and other valuable products to be obtained in Honduras and Yucatan. Farther south, along the coast of Honduras and Nicaragua, there were the attractions of pearl fisheries and stranded turtle on the coral reefs and cays. In this direction, moreover, the English adventurers (more than those of any other nations) came into contact with the Mosquito Indians.

These were tribes inhabiting the Atlantic coast of Honduras, Nicaragua, and even Costa Rica, which did not so readily give in to the Spaniards as the more easily

conquered natives on the Pacific coasts of Central America. Whether their name was derived from the fact that the coastlands of their country swarmed with mosquitoes (which word in Spanish meant "a little fly"), or whether their irritating night attacks reminded the Spaniards of mosquitoes and obtained for them that nickname, does not seem to have been recorded. It may be that "Mesquitia" or "Mosquitia", which in early days was the Spanish name given to much of their territory, was simply the corruption of a native name (Miskit) bearing an accidental resemblance to the Spanish word mosquito. In any case, as "Mosquito Indians" these tribes of eastern Central America became celebrated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as deadly enemies of the Spaniards. They played a considerable part in the history of Central America down to a few years ago, when the lands in which they had so long maintained independence were incorporated in the Spanish-American republics of Nicaragua and Honduras by an incomprehensible blunder of nineteenth-century British statesmen.

The Mosquito Indians were described by Dampier and other writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as being well made, raw-boned, lusty, strong, and nimble of foot; long visaged, with lank black hair, a stern look, and rough-hewn features. Their skins were of a dark copper colour.<sup>1</sup> They married but one wife, with whom

<sup>1</sup> Dampier also refers to them as "tall", but most authorities describe them as short, not to say dwarfish.

The Mosquito Indians were characterized in 1730 by John Cockburn (some of whose adventures are described later) as being of diminutive stature. He states that it was on account of their smallness and activity that they were styled "Mosquitos" by the Spaniards. They seem to have been known amongst themselves as *Sankuda*. According to Cockburn they were seldom over 5 feet in height, many of them being absolute pigmies, yet very well proportioned and completely naked. Their skin was a dark brown, marked all over from the shoulders to the heels with wavy lines traced in a blue indelible ink. They had long black hair hanging almost down to the ground, and

## Dampier and the Logwood Cutters 215

they lived till death separated the couple. At their first coming together the man would set to work and make a small plantation; and, the cultivable land being plentiful enough in those days, they could choose what spot they pleased. They preferred, however, to settle near the sea or by some river, for the sake of obtaining fish—their favourite diet—and the flesh of the manati; they were therefore essentially a people of the coast, and often at war with the other Amerindians of the hinterland.

After the man had cleared a piece of land and planted it he seldom attended to it afterwards, but left the management of the estate to his wife, while he went off on his river-fishing or sea adventures. These consisted of the search for pearl-oyster shells, and the harpooning of turtle or manati, or the seining of fish. Whatever he got in the way of food he brought home to his wife, and seldom stirred out to seek for more until the first supply was all eaten. When hunger began afterwards to bite, the man either took his canoe and sought for more game at sea, or walked out into the woods and hunted about for deer or peccaries (the collared and the whitelipped), and seldom returned empty handed. Their plantations were small, and seldom contained more than twenty or thirty banana trees, a bed of yams and sweet-potatoes, a bush of cayenne pepper, and a small plot of pineapples. This last fruit was a thing they delighted in, for out of its sweet juice they made a fermented drink which was much esteemed at their feasts. It was their custom to prepare banquets from time to time and invite their friends to

every man had a hole pierced through his nose and chin. Through the nose they thrust a porcupine quill, and the slit in the chin was generally filled by the large tooth of some beast. The women made holes in their cheeks, into which they stuck bunches of various-coloured feathers, while they also wore strings of jaguars' teeth hanging round their ears.



partake of fish and flesh, washed down by potations of the sweet pineapple wine. This liquor was pressed out from the peeled pineapples into a wooden trough like a little canoe; and, after fermentation, was strong enough to make all the feasters drunk. Because of their sometimes sinister results it was seldom that such feasts were made; for the giver of the feast usually had a design at the back of his mind to be revenged for some injury done him, or "to debate such differences as had happened between him and his neighbours, and to examine into the truth of such matters". Yet before they were warmed with drink they would never speak one word of their grievances; and the women, who commonly knew their husbands' intentions, prevented them from doing any injury to each other by hiding their lances, harpoons, bows and arrows, or any other weapon they brought with them. They were very ingenious at throwing the lance, the harpoon, or any kind of dart, being bred to it from infancy; for the boy children, imitating their fathers, never went abroad without a lance in their hands to throw at objects, till use had made them sure of hand and eye. They would also practise warding off lances, arrows, or darts in the following manner: two boys standing a short distance apart would hurl a blunt stick at one another; each of them, holding a small stick in his right hand, would attempt to strike away that which was darted at him. As they grew in years they became more dexterous and courageous, and then they would offer themselves as targets to anyone that had a mind to aim arrows at them. These they would strike aside with a very small stick no bigger than the rod of a fowling-piece. After years of practice they would become so adroit at this art of defence as to be able to guard their bodies

## Dampier and the Logwood Cutters 217

from a perfect flight of arrows, provided two from the same direction did not happen to come at once.

The Mosquito Indians had extraordinarily keen eyes, and could descry a sail at sea farther than was possible to any white man. With their courage and address as seafarers they would probably have played a great part in the conquest and development of the West Indies, as rivals to the Caribs, had the white man not come on the scene to ruin the chances of the Amerindian. The Mosquitos had acquired the art of making magnificent 50-foot-long canoes by hollowing out the trunks of juniper or mahogany trees. These canoes (*periaguas*) were partially decked, and could affront rough seas without capsizing. But for their harpooning and fishing operations they used a small canoe, which was kept neat and clean. Both kinds of canoe were propelled by paddles which were held perpendicularly, the staff being gripped hard with both hands, and the blade forcing back the water with main strength applied with very quick strokes. When out on their fishing or harpooning expeditions only two men would go in each small canoe. One sat in the stern, the other knelt down at the prow, and both paddled till they came to the place where they expected their game. Then they lay still, or paddled very softly, looking well about them, and the man at the head of the canoe put down his paddle and stood up with his striking staff in his hand. This staff was about 8 feet long, almost as thick as a man's upper arm at its lower end, in which there was a hole for the insertion of the barbed prong or harpoon. At the thinner end of the staff was a piece of cork-like wood, with a hole in it through which the small end of the staff passed. Affixed to this float was a line of 60 to 70 feet in length, the other end of which was made fast to the harpoon, lodged in the

thick and heavy end of the staff; and the Mosquito Indian would keep about 6 feet of this cord loose in his hand. When he struck at turtle, manati, or big fish, the harpoon was presently dislodged from the staff, and as the wounded animal swam away, the line unreeled from the float, and although at first both staff and float might be carried under water, yet as the line drew off farther they would rise to the surface again. Then the fishermen paddled with all their might to get hold of the float and regain hold of the staff. When their quarry began to be tired it lay still, and then the Mosquito men would cautiously haul in the line. If it was a manati<sup>1</sup> they were after, this water beast would, after resting, swim away again, tugging the canoe behind him. "Then", wrote Dampier, "he that steers must be nimble to turn the head of the canoe the way that his consort points, who being in the head of the canoe, and holding the line, both sees and feels which way the manati is swimming. Thus the canoe is towed with a violent motion, till the manati's strength decays. Then they gather in the line. . . . At length when the creature's strength is spent, they hale it up to the canoe's side, knock it on the head, and tow it to the nearest shore, where they make it fast. This done, they are off for another, which, having taken and killed, they go on shore with it to put it into their canoe, for it is so heavy that they cannot lift it in, but they hale it up in shoal water, as near the shore as they can, and then upset the canoe, laying one side close to the manati. Then they roll it in, which brings the canoe upright again, and when they have heaved out the water they fasten a line to the other manati that lieth afloat and toweth it after them. I have known two Mosquito men for a week every day bring aboard two manatis in this

<sup>1</sup> The manati is described on pp. 232-3 and p. 168

manner, the least of which hath not weighed less than 600 pounds, and that in a very small canoe, that three Englishmen would scarce adventure to go in. When they strike a cow that hath a young one, they seldom miss the calf, for she commonly takes her young under one of her fins. But if the calf is so big that she cannot carry it, or so frightened that she only minds to save her own life, yet the young never leaves her till the Mosquito men have an opportunity to strike it.

“The manner of striking manati and tortoise is much the same, only when they seek for manati they paddle so gently that they make no noise, and never touch the side of the canoe with their paddle, because it is a creature that hears very well. But they are not so nice when they seek for turtle, whose eyes are better than their ears. They strike the turtle with a square sharp iron peg, the other with a harpoon. The Mosquito men make their own striking instruments, as harpoons, fish hooks, and tortoise irons or pegs. These pegs or tortoise irons are made four-square, sharp at one end, and not much above an inch in length. The small spike at the broad end hath a line fastened to it, and goes also into a hole at the end of the striking staff, which, when the turtle is struck, flies off, the iron and the end of the line fastened to it going quite within the shell, where it is so buried that the turtle cannot possibly escape.”

Besides pursuing manati and turtles—both the Green Turtle for its flesh and fat, and the Hawksbill Turtle for its tortoise shell—the Mosquito Indians set great store by the Tarpon, a fish since made famous to us by British and American sportsmen in connection with Florida. The tarpon (*Megalops atlanticus*) is a large scaly fish, shaped much like a salmon, but somewhat flatter, of a dull silver

colour, "with scales the size of a half-crown" (nearly 2 inches in diameter). Its full-grown specimens may reach to 6 feet in length, and weigh 110 pounds. The Tarpon furnished the buccaneers with good wholesome meat and quantities of fat, in some cases 2 or 3 pounds to a fish. It was caught in those days either with nets or by striking with the harpoon, a feat at which the Mosquitos were very expert. When they decided, however, that the tarpons were numerous they endeavoured to net them with a seine. This long net having enclosed a great number of fish, and its two ends being drawn inshore, the great tarpons would essay to leap out over the edge of the seine into the open sea, but the progress of the net shorewards was followed by naked Indians swimming close up to it, so that when the great fish made as if to spring over the net the man who was nearest grasped both net and fish in his arms and held fast till the others came to his assistance. Canoes would also move shorewards outside the seine, so that the leaping fish might occasionally fall into them.

It is needless to describe the men of this race as practically amphibious. They would venture far out to sea in their small canoes, and were perfect allies to the buccaneers as spies and lookout men, being able to sight approaching Spanish ships without themselves being seen. They had devised a method of sinking their canoes to the very edge of the water if they saw a sailing ship in the distance. The men in the canoes would then lie with their heads just above water till the ship had passed on its way. Dampier witnessed several instances of the sudden disappearance of these canoes and their occupants.

This practice made them equally elusive when pursued with evil purposes by the buccaneers they had so often befriended. In many parts of the Central American coast

these well-dispositioned Mosquito Indians had cause to dread the arrival of "privateers" or logwood cutters, who, with very shortsighted policy, were occasionally vile enough to kidnap any Indian they could get hold of and sell him into slavery. The Mosquito Indians, though they usually died in slavery, were much valued for their skill as pilots and harpooners.

Dampier states that these Mosquitos were in general "very civil and kind" to the English; "they do not love the French, and hate the Spaniards mortally". Although in the first half of the seventeenth century a few rascally English pirates attempted to catch and enslave them, the privateers and buccaneers soon found it more to their advantage to treat with respect and kindness these invaluable allies. Serving on the English ships, they often came to Jamaica, finding congenial friends in the jolly English sailor men. "We always humour them, letting them go any whither as they will, and return to their country in any vessel bound that way, if they please." They were invaluable to the ship's company as providers of fresh food; for one or two of them in a ship could maintain 100 men by their prowess with harpoons and fishing nets: "so that when we careen our ships", wrote Dampier, "we choose commonly such places where there is plenty of turtle or manati for these Mosquito men to strike". It was rare in the seventeenth or early eighteenth century to find privateer, exploring, or pirate ship destitute of one Mosquito Indian among its company. When allowed to use guns they proved themselves good marksmen, behaved very boldly in fighting, and never seemed to flinch or hang back; "for they think that the white men with whom they are know better than they do when it is best to fight, and let the disadvantage

of their own party be never so great, they will never yield nor give back while any of their party stand”.

While they were among the English they wore good clothes, and took delight in being neatly and tightly clad; but when they returned home they doffed their European clothing and reduced themselves quickly to a comfortable nakedness, with at most a waist-sash of calico or bark cloth. Though so friendly and subservient in disposition, however, they were sensitive, touchy on some points, and very proud of their skill as fishermen. They would refuse any participation of the English sailors in their harpooning, and always went to their sport in their own little canoes, which a European could not enter without danger of capsizing. If any white man insisted on meddling with their canoes, or advising them too much what to do, they turned sulky and refused to budge from the ships or the shore, even though they could see shoals of fish or turtle. If compelled to go after them, they would purposely strike their harpoons and turtle irons aside, or so glance them as to kill nothing.

According to Dampier they had originally no form of government in their own land, but came latterly to acknowledge the King of England for their sovereign. They certainly learnt English to a considerable extent. For a century and a half they considered the Governor of Jamaica “to be one of the greatest princes in the world”, and their principal lawgiver. When in course of time they selected chiefs who became local “kings”, these kings received their investiture from British officers representing the King of Great Britain. For a century and a half we enabled them to resist Spanish aggression, and they, in their turn, assisted our adventurous seamen and merchants not only to open up a great trade along the forbidden Atlantic

coasts of Central America, but even, as Dampier relates, to navigate the Pacific coasts in safety from shipwreck, famine, and capture by the Spaniards. Mosquito Indians even followed the English adventurers across the Pacific into Australasian waters, where they speared turtle for them, climbed coconut palms for fruit, and found fresh food for the bewildered, stupid, scurvy-stricken seamen.

Guided by Mosquito Indians, the buccaneer captains realized the advantages of the Ruatan or Bay Islands, off the coast of Honduras. This archipelago was captured by an English expedition in 1642 and held for eight years. The Bay Islands, which were quite needlessly surrendered by Great Britain to Spanish Honduras in the first half of the eighteenth century, and recovered again by the British in the early nineteenth century (only to be given up finally and foolishly to Spanish Honduras), were for long a basis from which the more or less legitimate trade of British adventurers was carried on with the opposite coasts of Honduras, Guatemala, and Yucatan. For various reasons there were few Spanish forts or garrisons on the actual coastline of Yucatan and Honduras in the first half of the seventeenth century. Consequently the men from the privateer or buccaneer ships feared not to land and ramble about as if they were in their own country, seeking for game of any sort like wild fowl or deer, of both of which there was great plenty. Occasionally, however, they would be pounced on by a force of Spanish soldiers, warned by some Amerindian fishermen of the Maya stock, who may have suffered rough treatment at the hands of the buccaneers. On such occasions it was customary for the Spaniards to ask which of the party of captured seamen was the captain. Very often there was no commissioned officer in such a crew, and the English prisoners



would be afraid to answer, either because, if they acknowledged they were captainless, they would be hanged as lawless robbers and pirates, or if one of them assumed this rank and could not prove it by his commission, he might be singled out for execution. Dampier records, however, one instance in which, the Spaniards having captured six or seven Englishmen coming from Jamaica and interrogated them when they reached the fortress as to who among their number was their leader, one John Hullock, after an uncomfortable silence, "cocked up his little cocked hat" and said he was the captain, but that he had left his commission on board, having only come ashore to hunt, and expecting to meet with no enemies. The Spaniards were so satisfied with this answer that they treated him with much greater respect than his fellow seamen, and gave him better lodging and provisions, and a horse to ride on when he was sent up for the inspection of the Governor of Yucatan. Eventually all these captured men got their liberty; for the Spaniards in later times seem again and again to have behaved with much greater kindness and less barbarity towards these English pirates than we might think from the denunciations hurled against them. Ever afterwards John Hullock went by the name of "Captain Jack".

When the Spaniards had achieved, more or less, the conquest and occupation of Yucatan in the middle of the sixteenth century, they began to understand the importance of logwood<sup>1</sup> as a dye, and probably shipped it to

<sup>1</sup> Logwood is the heart of the timber of a tree belonging to the bean order—*Hæmatoxylon campechianum*. It attains a height not exceeding 40 feet. It is a singularly beautiful object in Tropical American landscapes, with abundant, evergreen, mimosa-like foliage, and yellow blossoms exhaling the most delicious honied scent. When in full bloom each graceful tree or tall bush is completely covered with a mass of pale-gold or straw-yellow flowers. To the present writer it appeared to be one of the most beautiful sights in Tropical America to see a grove of logwood trees in full



*Photo. supplied by Underwood & Underwood*

A CHUTE FOR MAHOGANY LOGS ON AN ESTATE NEAR VACA FALLS



Europe from the close of the sixteenth century onwards. But it was long before the English pirates who preyed on Spanish commerce realized the value of this product of the Central American forests. When English ships began to cruise regularly off the coast of Yucatan, and captured many prizes, they were so ignorant of the value of logwood that they frequently turned the ships adrift after they had taken everything out of them except their cargo of logs. But at last—say from 1650 onwards—being made aware of the price this dyewood fetched in the markets of Spain, France, and the Netherlands, they became able to recognize it as it grew in the forests, and thenceforth infested the eastern coasts of Central America (especially round the peninsula of Yucatan and northern Honduras) in spite of Spanish hostility.

The early logwood cutters were good marksmen, and, in fact, were the ordinary type of buccaneer, on the lookout for other things besides dyewoods. They pursued the wild cattle in the forests and parklands, and especially delighted in acts of frank piracy. They began (most ungratefully) to attack Amerindian towns, plunder them, and, when successful, carry away large numbers of captives, keeping the women to serve them in their huts and sending the men to be sold as slaves at Jamaica. Every now and then they had a great drinking bout on board the ships that came over to the logwood coast to trade; and would spend as much as £30 or £40 at a sitting, not merely on liquor, but on the gunpowder which was ex-

blossom. This tree is a distant relation of the Brazil-wood and Brazileto, trees which yield a brilliant scarlet, a crimson, or an orange dye, and belong to the Leguminous genera *Cæsalpinia* and *Peltophorum*. But the dye obtained from logwood ranges in colour from blue black to rich purple and pale mauve. It was much used at one time for colouring ink and adulterating port wine, but it became chiefly valued as a purple dye in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

travagantly fired as salutes after each toast. Even when sober men came into the Bay of Campeche they would become corrupted by the old hands, so that at last through excessive drunkenness and debauchery these formerly brave and daring logwood cutters were not always able to resist or evade the Spanish reprisals, and many of them were carried away as prisoners to Mexican towns, where they were sold as apprentices to tradesmen. According to Dampier, it is untrue that such Englishmen were sent to work in the mines of Mexico, and there used barbarously. He denied this, saying that the Spaniards were either too kindly disposed or too fearful that the English prisoners would escape from the mines and reveal their locality, besides proclaiming the weakness of the Spaniards' hold over these regions. As a rule, the captured logwood cutters were eventually sent back to Spain with the Spanish fleet and then allowed to return to England; or without much difficulty they made their escape on their own account and managed to get back to Tortuga or Jamaica.

A few English seamen with a small ship captured the important town of Campeche, on the western side of Yucatan, about 1652; and although this had again to be surrendered to the Spaniards, ten years later there was established a strong colony of English logwood cutters on the east coast of Yucatan, which spread by degrees southwards beyond the Cape Catoche already referred to, to the River Belize (which last derived its name probably from the English pirate Willis—a name pronounced by the Spaniards *Velize* but written *Belize*). Another stronghold of the logwood cutters, well described subsequently by Dampier, was the Lake and Island of Triste, on the western side of Yucatan, near Tabasco and Campeche.

## Dampier and the Logwood Cutters 227

But Belize, as being far less easily attacked by the Spaniards from the direction of the interior or from the coast, gradually became the headquarters of these woodcutters and the nucleus of "British Honduras".

A treaty, negotiated with Spain in 1670 by Sir William Godolphin, for the first time recognized on the part of Spain the conquest of Jamaica and other West India Islands, and gave some slight justification for the establishments on the Honduras coast, though the degree of this recognition was a matter of dispute for 150 years afterwards. At any rate, it encouraged the English to increase their establishments along the Belize coast, and towards the close of the seventeenth century there were quite 700 men settled here, cutting the logwood and slaying the cattle that had run wild in the woods and savannas.

We learn most of what we know concerning the logwood cutters and the adventures of British pioneers in Honduras and other parts of Central America in the second half of the seventeenth century from the remarkable books of Dampier, whose adventures in Australasia have been already described in a volume of this Pioneer series. WILLIAM DAMPIER was the son of a farmer residing at East Coker, near Yeovil, in Somersetshire, and was born in May or June, 1652. He received a good education for his class in life, but was evidently of an adventurous turn, for at the age of seventeen he was apprenticed to a sea captain of Weymouth, with whom he voyaged to Newfoundland, which he found much too cold. In 1671 he went out as an ordinary seaman to Java on board a vessel of the English East India Company. In the following year he served in the Royal Navy in the war against the Dutch. After returning home for a few months, invalided, he was sent out by the lord of the

manor of East Coker as an assistant manager of a plantation in Jamaica. He was then about twenty-two years old, and had never been in the West Indies, and therefore, "lest he might be trepanned and sold as a servant after his arrival in Jamaica" (apparently a common practice where all young and inexperienced persons were concerned), he agreed to work his passage out there as a seaman.

The ship on which he had embarked, though bound for Jamaica, was carried by the trade wind farther south; and, after sighting Barbados, passed along the Windward Islands, calling at St. Lucia. Here the crew bought bananas, pineapples, and sugar cane from the Carib Indians. Eventually they reached the south coast of Jamaica, and Dampier went direct to Spanish Town, the ancient capital, then and now called "Sant' Iago de la Vega". On his way thither he passed through plantations where cacao trees were growing. He only stayed, however, for six months at the plantation of which he had been appointed assistant manager, afterwards transferring his services to another planter at St. Anne's, on the north side of the island. He rode across Jamaica along a route, now well known to tourists, which passes round the base of Mount Diablo. But he was clearly out of his element as a planter, so he sailed round the island to Port Royal and entered the service of a master of coasting vessels. This led to his engaging himself to sail to the Bay of Campeche, on the western side of the great peninsula of Yucatan, to cut and load logwood, in defiance of the Spaniards and their prohibitions.

The little ship on which Dampier sailed had brought a cargo of rum and sugar to sell to the logwood cutters, or rather to exchange for logwood. The cutters came on

board and soon absorbed the rum and sugar, which was combined in the form of punch. As already related, they drank their liquor in toasts to each other's health, and after each fiery potation discharged their guns as a salute—surely an imprudent proceeding if they wished to avoid the notice of cruising Spanish ships; but prudence was not one of the qualities which distinguished these bold pioneers. Dampier went on shore as one of the crew of seven to assist in bringing off the logwood in canoes. He made several trips to the huts of the logwood cutters, who entertained him most kindly with pork and pease pudding, beef and flour dumplings, as well as making him drink the rum or punch which they had just purchased from the little sailing vessel.

Dampier describes these woodmen, amongst whom he sojourned for a while, as being generally sturdy, strong fellows, who could carry burdens of 300 or 400 pounds in weight. Some felled the trees, while others sawed and split them into convenient logs. If a tree, after felling, should be too great a burden for one man to drag, it was broken in pieces by gunpowder. The men chiefly frequented the creeks of the east and west lagoons in small companies, building their huts close to the seaside for the benefit of the sea breeze, but as near the logwood groves as possible. The huts, though slightly built, were carefully thatched with palm fronds to prevent the violent rains from soaking through. A wooden frame or barbecue would be raised  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet above the ground on one side of the house, with tall sticks rising at each corner to support the mosquito nets without which it was impossible to sleep. Another wooden framework was erected in the hut and covered with earth, as a hearth on which food could be cooked; while a third framework served as a couch on which to sit



## 230      Pioneers in Tropical America

when the men were eating. During the wet season the ground was so overflowed with the rains that the log cutters often stepped from their beds into water outside the house 2 or 3 feet deep, and continued standing in the water all day till it was time to go to bed. Nevertheless they accounted this the best season of the year for working.

Every Saturday, as a rule, they went hunting, to provide themselves with beef for the week following. The wild cattle<sup>1</sup> were at their best and fattest in the spring months, though they provided good beef at all seasons of the year. When a party of these men had killed an ox they cut it into four quarters, then, taking out all the bones, each man would make a hole in the middle of his quarter just big enough to pass his head through, and afterwards trudge home, all bloody, with the huge piece of beef covering his shoulders. Sometimes these cattle were driven off the ridges of dry ground into the water and forced to swim, and then were pursued in canoes. Occasionally a hunted beast would turn and come full tilt at the canoe with its horns. The chief care of the men then was to keep the prow of the canoe towards the charging ox, lest if it struck the canoe broadside the vessel would capsize. Then not only would arms and ammunition be spoilt by the water, but in the rainy season of the year the flooded savannas swarmed with crocodiles and caimans, which were very dangerous to men in the water.

Some of these bold privateers had travelled up the Rio San Pedro (in northern Guatemala) towards the high mountains of Chiapas, and near to a great Indian town, on the mighty River Usumasinta. They told Dampier

<sup>1</sup> These, of course, as in Hispaniola, were the descendants of the cattle introduced by the Spaniards after their conquest of Mexico. A hundred years later the woods and savannas of southern Mexico and Honduras swarmed with large herds of wild oxen.

## Dampier and the Logwood Cutters 231

that in this region there were many cacao and banana plantations, the soil being very fruitful. There were also groves of the cotton tree, and great meadows or savannas full of wild oxen and wild horses, and frequented also by tapirs.<sup>1</sup>

The fauna of south-eastern Mexico and Honduras at the time of Dampier's adventures was a rich one, and had a very tropical "South American" aspect. It included two or three kinds of deer (Virginian deer and brockets), the two large and small kinds of peccary, opossums, porcupines, armadilloes, ant-eaters, sloths, monkeys, and a creature called by Dampier the squash, by which he evidently means the long-nosed Coati, a creature of the Raccoon family. This he describes as having good, sweet, wholesome flesh, like that of a pig, because it feeds on nothing but good fruit; being taken young, it becomes as tame as a dog and as roguish as a monkey.

As to the monkeys of this region, he describes them as the ugliest he ever saw, with great tails  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet long, bare underneath, with a black hard skin, but the upper side of the tail and all the body covered with coarse, long, black, staring hair. He probably alludes to the Spider monkeys with prehensile tails. These creatures went about, twenty or thirty in a company, in the woods, leaping from tree to tree. They were most threatening towards any human being whom they might meet, especially if he was alone, so that Dampier was afraid to shoot at them; for they would assemble in a great company, dancing from

<sup>1</sup> This last was probably a peculiar form of tapir (*Tapirus bairdi*), which together with an allied species of western Central America (*T. dowi*), differs from the other tapirs in having a bony support to the prehensile nose. Dampier describes it as the size of a bullock of two years old, calls it the Mountain Cow, and says that it has a pretty long tail. This, of course, is quite incorrect, as all tapirs have little more than a stump. Baird's tapir is always found in the woods near some large river, feeding on the long, thin grass, and taking refuge in the water at the least noise.

tree to tree over his head, chattering with a terrible noise, making many grim faces, even throwing sticks at him. At last one bigger than the rest leaped at a small bough just over his head, making him start back; but the monkey caught hold of the bough, swinging by his tail and making mouths at the frightened Englishman. The females sometimes had two young at a birth, in which case they carried one young one under an arm and the other on the back, where it clasped its mother round the neck. In another year of his travels, when visiting the Pacific coast of Central America, Dampier refers to the "little black monkeys" (Sapajous) which lived on islets or on the coast line, and came down to the seashore at low tide, pulled periwinkles and oysters off the rocks, and extracted the flesh of these snails and bivalves with their fingers.

It is curious that he should give such a detailed and accurate description of the great ant-eater and the sloth, and describe them as inhabitants of eastern Mexico (Yucatan), since they are not now recorded from that region, and perhaps do not extend farther north in their range than Nicaragua. In his remembrance he may have confused Yucatan with Nicaragua, a country which he subsequently visited.

In the creeks the manati existed in numbers, and its flesh was sweet and grateful to the hungry buccaneers. Dampier thus describes the Sirenian<sup>1</sup>:

"I have heard of some that have weighed above 1200 pounds, but I never saw any so large. The manati delights

<sup>1</sup> In *Pioneers in West Africa* the manati is also referred to, while the dugong, another Sirenian, comes into the story of the *Pioneers in Australasia*. The *Sirenia* are an order of mammals living entirely in the water, but frequenting mostly rivers, estuaries, and shallow seacoasts. They feed entirely on grass, seaweed, and other forms of water vegetation. The order originated in the eastern Mediterranean from the parent stock of elephants, hyraxes, and other primeval ungulates.

to live in brackish water, and it is commonly found in creeks and rivers near the sea." This water mammal, according to him, does not care for deep water, but prefers shallow, along the banks of rivers or off flat coasts where there is abundance of grass and seaweed. Even those that frequent the seacoast from time to time return to the mouths of rivers and fresh water. They live chiefly on grass 7 or 8 inches long, and of a narrow blade, which grows in the sea in many places, in creeks, and in great tidal estuaries. But although the manati always frequents shallow water it is careful not to get stranded, and never actually comes ashore. Its flesh is white, both the fat and the lean, "and extraordinarily sweet, wholesome meat". The tail of a young cow is most esteemed; but if old, both head and tail are very tough. "A sucking calf is most delicate meat." This was commonly roasted whole by the buccaneers, to whom also the skin of the manati was of great use, for it was cut into strips and used for the leather fittings of their ships and boats; while from the thick skin of the old bulls were made terrible whips. Whilst this hide was still fresh it was twisted into thongs which in a few weeks became as hard as wood.

As to the birds of Yucatan, they were of immense variety, and are really very well described by Dampier, who must have been a singularly observant man. He refers to the humming-birds, "no bigger than a great over-grown wasp, with black bills like small needles"; the many kinds of pigeons; the splendid curassows, the male of which is black, with a curled crest; the guans, somewhat smaller; the black, bald-headed turkey-buzzards, and the whitish-buff, black-winged King vulture, with its blue, red, and orange head and neck. Also to the starling-like icterids, with large, Roman-nose beaks,

which hang nests in the boughs of trees, much as do the weaver-birds of the Old World. These hang-nests were called by the English log-cutters "subtle-jacks", because of their clever way of building. The toucans with their large beaks he compares, by no means improperly, to woodpeckers. He also describes the Californian quails, the musk and the whistling ducks (*Cairina* and *Dendrocygna*), the many different kinds of plover, curlew, and crab-catcher; the herons, the pelicans, the cormorants, the fishing-hawks, and the great frigate birds. Dampier further observed in these districts the hairy spiders of prodigious size, nearly as big as a man's fist, having "two teeth, or rather horns",  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long, and of proportionate bigness, "as black as jet, smooth as glass, and the curved ends sharp as a thorn". These fangs, he declares, were often preserved by the logwood cutters, who kept them in their tobacco pouches to pick their pipes, or even used them as toothpicks. The backs of the spiders were covered with a dark-yellowish down as soft as velvet. This description applies to the great hairy Mygale spiders (*Avicularia* or *Theraphosa*) of Central America, said to be powerful enough to capture, kill, and suck small birds, though this statement has often been denied.<sup>1</sup>

On the way back to Jamaica, after eluding two Spanish ships and narrowly coming to disaster by striking the rocks of small islands, on which immense numbers of gannets and terns had assembled for laying and hatching their eggs, Dampier, after his first logwood voyage, reached the Island of Pines, off Cuba. Here he believed

<sup>1</sup>The largest known spider—a *Theraphosa*—is only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length of body. This comes from Guiana. Another genus of large, hairy spiders in Central America is *Eurypelma*.

that he saw raccoons, which, if true, would be a very curious fact, such an animal being found no longer in Cuba or any of its adjacent islands.<sup>1</sup> He also notes the existence of the manchineal tree, with its terribly poisonous fruit, which neither bird nor beast will taste, but which nevertheless is greedily devoured by land-crabs. The manchineal tree (*Hippomane mancinella*), a species of Euphorbia, is found in the marshy districts along the coasts of the West India Islands and Central America. Its leaves, bark, and blossoms are all extremely poisonous, and in fact furnish the arrow poison used by the Americans in this part of America. The tree grows to as much as 40 feet in height, and even the water below it is rendered poisonous by its decaying leaves. The flowers are of a sickly yellow colour, something like those of poppies, but the bark of the tree is fibrous and makes excellent rope, while the trunk and the branches are extraordinarily light, like cork in fact, and are therefore useful for making floats and buoys. The black land-crabs after they have fed on the leaves or flowers of this tree are very poisonous. Dampier also states that there were many "alligators" (crocodiles) on this Island of Pines, and that they were the most daring of all he had met with in the West Indies. In the water they would follow a canoe and put their heads up over the gunwale with their jaws wide open; or when the men camped on the seashore at night the crocodiles boldly came in amongst them; and after the men had fled they snatched the meat from the cooking pots. If the men were sleeping round their

<sup>1</sup>Yet, as a species of raccoon is found in the Bahama Islands, and these at no very ancient period were more or less united with Cuba and Hispaniola, it is possible that Dampier was right, and that since his day the raccoons became extinct on the Island of Pines as well as in Cuba. He may, however, have seen instead the large tree-frequenting rodent, the Hutia (*Capromys*).

## 238      Pioneers in Tropical America

unprovided with guns, except when they were ships belonging to the King of Spain. They lacked not only guns but other means of warfare, and even the guns, when they were present, were so badly arranged on platforms that the English could dislodge them with small shot from their boats. The main reason of their unreadiness to fight and of the bad management of their ships lay in Spanish pride: the Spaniards were too proud to be seamen, but used Amerindians for all the hard and rough work of the ship, only one Spaniard, perhaps, going in the smaller vessels as an officer. The Indians were often skilful seamen, but had naturally no heart in defending their vessel against the attacks of pirates, being, indeed, only too glad thus to escape from Spanish thralldom.

The Spanish ships (writes Mr. C. H. Haring in *The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the Seventeenth Century*) were notoriously clumsy and unseaworthy. With short keel and towering poop and forecastle, they were an easy prey to the long, low, close-sailing sloops and barks of the buccaneers. Moreover, they were sometimes so embarrassed with goods and passengers that it was scarcely possible to defend them when attacked. Merchant ships were armed with such feeble crews, owing to overcrowding (of passengers and soldiers), that it was all they could do to survive the spells of bad weather, let alone to outmanœuvre a swift-sailing buccaneer.

## CHAPTER IX

### Dampier, Wafer, and the Pirate Captains

FROM Triste Island, at the beginning of April, 1678, Dampier sailed for Jamaica, and thence returned to England, where he married and remained for nearly a year. He was off again to Jamaica, however, in 1679, intending to return home for Christmas, having purchased a small estate in Dorsetshire from the proceeds of his logwood venture. But just as he was leaving for home he was constrained by the desertion of his comrades to accompany three leading privateer or pirate captains—John Coxon, Richard Sawkins, and Bartholomew Sharp—on a voyage of reckless adventure which was to begin with an attack on Porto Bello, that unfortunate Spanish town on the Panamá Isthmus which only eleven years before had been completely sacked and nearly destroyed by Henry Morgan and his following.

Nevertheless, being still the port of departure and arrival of the great Spanish treasure fleets, and the place at which the wealth of Peru was shipped for Europe, it was thought to be sufficiently recovered to be worth a visit from the pirates. The party of four to five hundred men whom Dampier accompanied apparently took the town without much difficulty, and held it to ransom, and the division of the booty worked out to about £30 apiece.

The greater number of the pirates next determined to try for Panamá, an enterprise pronounced too foolhardy



by a small minority. Nevertheless, the three captains, joined by a fourth—Edmund Cook, who brought with him as ship's surgeon the celebrated LIONEL WAFER—set out with about 330 fighting men (Dampier among them) for new adventures in the South Seas. They carried with them a small supply of provisions and "toys wherewith to gratify the wild Indians". The isthmus was quickly crossed; and on its Pacific coast they got together (no doubt by hire, purchase, persuasion, and forcible means) a small fleet of Amerindian vessels—dug-out canoes, and square-sterned, decked "periaguas".

With these canoes they appeared before New Panamá, the city which the Spaniards had built to replace the town burnt down at the time of Henry Morgan's attack in 1670. But this impudent attempt failed, and after suffering a severe rebuff off the fort of Puebla Nova (on which occasion Captain Richard Sawkins lost his life), the 330 (more or less) decided to go on a long, predatory cruise to the south in their Indian canoes. [This proceeding gives some measure of the courage of these pioneers, inasmuch as their voyage extended as far south as Chile and as much out into the open Pacific Ocean as the isle of Juan Fernandez.]

But they had ill luck, and great discontent arose amongst them. The majority decided to try their fortune in some other direction, while Dampier and forty-four others, including Lionel Wafer, two invaluable Mosquito Indians, and five Amerindian slaves of other districts, set off for the great rendezvous of privateers—the San Blas Archipelago on the Atlantic coast of Darien. The personal adventures of Dampier on this overland journey were not specially remarkable, and it will be more interesting, therefore, to give instead an account of what happened

## Dampier, Wafer, and Pirate Captains 241

to one of his companions, the surgeon, Lionel Wafer, already mentioned. Lionel Wafer was apparently born in Wales, about 1661, but passed much of his boyhood in eastern Ireland and western Scotland, in the course of which he learnt to speak Irish and Gaelic. When fifteen or sixteen years old he was engaged as boy assistant to accompany the surgeon of a ship sailing to Java. The next year, however, he reached Jamaica in another ship, as a surgeon's assistant, and practised as a surgeon in Jamaica till the end of 1679, when he joined two buccaneers, Captains Edmund Cook and Lynch, to be surgeon on a cruise to Cartagena and Porto Bello. Eventually he found himself with the minority of forty-four of which Dampier was a member. With them he attempted to cross the isthmus back to the Atlantic. He sustained a bad accident to his knee through an explosion of gunpowder not long after the party of buccaneers had quitted the Pacific coast of the Isthmus of Darien. This was in the month of May, 1681, and Wafer, together with a companion, Richard Gopson (who had been an apprentice to a druggist in London), was left behind to be taken care of by the Indians and afterwards make his way if he could to the Atlantic seaboard. Another who stayed with him was "a plain mariner", John Hingson, and their party was subsequently joined by two other laggards, so that they were five in all. Richard Gopson was a good scholar, and carried about with him a Greek Testament, which he frequently read, and could translate extempore into English to such of the company as were disposed to hear him.

The kindly Indians soon set themselves to work to cure the wound in Wafer's knee. They took herbs, which they first chewed in their mouths to the consistency of a paste,

and then, putting the mess on a plantain leaf, laid it upon the sore. This proved so effectual that in about twenty days, after frequently renewed poultices, Wafér was perfectly cured, retaining only a slight weakness in the knee and a sensation of numbness. Yet in curious contradiction to this assiduous care of his wound the Indians were not very benevolent about the supply of food, looking very crossly at the five distressed Englishmen from time to time, and throwing green and uneatable plantains to them when they sat cringing, shivering with the wet weather and longing for food.

But one amongst the Indians had formerly been a prisoner with the Spaniards and had learnt the Spanish language before he escaped, and he by degrees showed himself truly generous and hospitable towards these wretched men, though apparently his charity had to be administered without the knowledge of his fellow countrymen. The rest of the buccaneers whom Dampier had accompanied had carried away with them by force from this village one or two Indian guides. It was this action on their part that had made the rest of the villagers so churlish towards the men left behind. As the days passed by and the guides did not return, these Indians resolved at last in their anger to kill their hostages. Accordingly they prepared a great pile of wood to burn them. It so happened, however, that one of their chiefs dissuaded them from this cruelty and proposed that the Englishmen should be sent to the Atlantic coast together with two Indians, who might perhaps then find out what had become of their fellow villagers and the rest of the buccaneers. This suggestion was accepted, and of the two guides chosen to accompany the Englishmen one was the kindly young man who could speak Spanish.

## Dampier, Wafer, and Pirate Captains 243

But for the first three days they had to march through nothing but swamps, whilst it rained continuously, with much thunder and lightning. At night time they crouched under dripping trees on the wet ground. The third night they reached a small hill, but only to find in the morning that the floods had made it into an island. Their only provision was a few handfuls of dried Indian corn. These miserable conditions were too much for their Indian guides, who left them to shift for themselves. After remaining a day on their hill the waters began to abate, and, one of the Englishmen having a pocket compass, they marched northwards till they reached a river quite 40 feet wide and very deep. But it chanced that a tall tree had fallen and lay right across the river, making a natural bridge, only the rain had rendered the smooth trunk so slippery that it was impossible to walk along it upright. They had, therefore, to sit astride the fallen tree and gradually edge themselves along. One of their number slipped off, and the stream hurried him away out of sight. The others hoped to find a path on the opposite side, but the floods had effaced it if there was one. Consequently they were obliged after all to recross the river along the tree, and seek out a road to the north in some other direction. After marching downstream a little distance they found that their companion who had slipped off the tree had succeeded in escaping from the water by the help of some boughs (though he was heavily weighted by his little treasure of 400 dollars, which he carried on his back) and had dragged himself on to the bank where they were walking. "He was a weakly man, a tailor by trade."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The professions and careers of the buccaneers and pirates before they emerged from obscure English life into this welter of adventure were often most incongruous.

Having been for three days without food, they fortunately discovered a tree loaded with berries, of which they ate greedily, and were even able to carry away a bundle. The stream they followed now joined with another, as deep and as broad; and despairing of being able to cross it they sat down and made two rafts of timber, on which they hoped to be able to float down to the Atlantic. The rafts were made of bamboos, tied together with vines or lianas ("bush ropes"). Wafer and his companions, whilst constructing this raft, took up their lodging for the night on a hillock, intending to make a splendid bonfire to warm and dry themselves. But not long after sunset "it fell a raining as if heaven and earth would meet", the storm being accompanied with horrid claps of thunder and such flashes of lightning and sulphurous smell as almost stifled them in the open air. At midnight, to their greater terror, they could hear the rivers roaring on both sides. It was so dark that nothing could be seen but the half-extinguished fire, except when there was a flash of lightning. Every now and again by this vivid glare they could see the water getting nearer and nearer to the top of the hillock. At last it drowned their fire. In despair the men attempted to climb the trees, but these were all great silk-cotton trees<sup>1</sup>, of a prodigious bigness from the root upwards and at least forty feet clear without any branch, so that there was no climbing them. Wafer, however, searching frantically for a refuge from the waters, found a large cotton tree which had become rotten and

We have noticed Gopson and his Greek Testament. Other pirates—captains or rank and file—had previously been missionaries, clerks in holy orders, schoolmasters, apothecaries, lawyers, and small tradesmen, besides those that were bred to the sea. Most of them took to piracy to mend their fortunes, and chiefly desired, when they had made money, to settle down in the English country or a London suburb.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 28.

hollow on one side, having in it a hole about 4 feet from the ground. He scrambled up to this, and in the cavity found a knob which served him as a stool. He was just able to cram himself in, head and heels almost together, not having room enough to stand or sit.

In this condition he sat waiting for day, but, being utterly worn out, fell asleep, and was soon awakened by the noise of great trees that were brought down with the flood knocking up against the tree in which he had taken refuge, which shook with the impact. Presently the water actually reached the lowest part of his cranny. The night was still very dark, except when flashes of lightning came, and these seemed to dart so near him that he was wholly taken up with praying to God to spare his life. At the height of his despair he saw the morning star appear through a rift in the clouds, and knew that day was at hand. The rain and lightning ceased, the waters abated, and by the time the sun was up the floods had fallen below the foot of the tree. At last he ventured out from his wet lodging, but could scarcely stand. There was no sign of his companions and no answer to his cries, so that he fell down in a swoon, oppressed with both grief and hunger. However, he had agitated himself needlessly, for all his companions appeared in course of time, having similarly saved themselves by climbing trees. The raft proved to be useless, as the water had entered and filled the hollow parts of the bamboos.

But this turned out to be providential, as the river did not proceed to the Atlantic Ocean but to the Pacific, so that had they succeeded in descending it they would have been worse off than ever, and would certainly have fallen into the hands of the Spaniards. But whilst mourning over their useless raft they were nevertheless starving for

want of food. At this moment they espied a deer fast asleep, and creeping up to it till they could almost touch it, attempted to shoot it with a gun; but owing to a stupid accident the gun went off before its holder could aim, and did the deer no harm, so that it started up, darted into the river, and swam across. They had now been *eight days* absent from the last Indian village, with no more food than two or three handfuls of dried maize and some berries. They attempted to follow the track of a peccary, hoping that it might bring them to some old plantation of bananas or potatoes. The guess was a fortunate one. But what was their amazement when they actually found themselves *back again* in the Indian village from which they had started! The natives were amazed to see them and began to ask questions, but Lionel Wafer very conveniently fell down in a swoon, which saved him all necessity of answering them. The Indians were touched with compassion, and at once gave the wretched Englishmen food to eat.

Most happily their return had coincided with that of the guides who had gone off with the main party of buccaneers, and had now returned, lauding the English pirates for their generosity and kindness. So that every care was taken of the Englishmen, who stayed in the village seven days to get well and strong again. The Indians were now only too eager to guide them to the Atlantic coast in the hope of getting more presents from the buccaneers. Accordingly four lusty young men led them again to the River Chiapo, which they once more crossed by the same prostrate tree. Here they obtained a canoe in which they paddled upstream till night, when all the party lodged at an Indian house and were treated in the best manner, and so continued their journey till

## Dampier, Wafer, and Pirate Captains 247

they reached the home of the kindly chief who had once before intervened to save their lives.

The house of this man (whose name was Lacenta) was situated on a pretty hill on which grew a most stately grove of silk-cotton trees, with orchards of fruit trees and bananas. This pleasant little hill was a peninsula of an oval form, almost surrounded by two great rivers, and defended on the side where it joined the land by a fence of prickly pears and bamboos. Here lived fifty principal men of the country, all under the command of this friendly chief, Lacenta. Arrived at this happy haven, Lacenta advised Wafer and his companions to discharge their guides, telling them that at this rainy season of the year it was quite impossible for them to finish their journey to the Atlantic. He advised them to stay with him; he would take great care of them, and eventually send them to their destination. They consented.

It was not long before an occurrence happened which tended to increase the good opinion of Lacenta and his people. It so happened that one of Lacenta's wives, being ill, decided to be bled. She seated herself on a stone in the river, and a young man with a small bow shot little arrows into her naked body up and down as fast as he could, not missing any prominent part. The arrowheads were so arranged that they could not penetrate farther than a very short distance into the skin. Nevertheless this seemed to Wafer a ridiculously barbarous way of bleeding a patient; so, perceiving their ignorance, he told Lacenta that if he agreed he would show them a better way, without putting the patient to so much torment. Consent being given, he then bound up the woman's arm with a piece of bark, and taking out his lancet (for amidst all his sufferings he seems to have carried a small case of instru-



ments about with him) he stabbed a vein. Blood at once spurted out; but so far from Lacenta being a tranquil spectator, he thought his wife was going to be killed. Taking hold of his lance, he swore "by his tooth" that if she lost her life he would have the heart's blood of the surgeon. However, the latter remained calm, and begged Lacenta to be patient, whilst he drew off about 11 ounces, after which he bound up the woman's arm and told her to rest perfectly still till the next day. The result was that her fever abated and she had no more fits, while her husband Lacenta came, surrounded by all his attendants, bowed low, and kissed the hand of Lionel Wafer. Then the attendants did the same, or if they could not get hold of his hand kissed his knee or his feet; after which he was put in a hammock and carried about on the men's shoulders.

He then lived some months amongst the Indians,<sup>1</sup> "who in a manner adored him". Several of them had been slaves to the Spaniards and had made their escape. They now expressed a desire to be baptized, "but more in order to have a European name than from anything they knew about Christianity". Wafer went on several hunting excursions with Lacenta, and on one of these, towards the beginning of the dry season, they passed by a river where Spaniards were gathering gold. Stealing softly

<sup>1</sup> Lionel Wafer, in describing these Darien Indians, many of whom were tall, shapely, and handsome, lays great stress on the not infrequent occurrence amongst them (and other Amerindians of the Panamá Isthmus) of albinos, whose skin was a metallic white or dead white, while their bodies were covered all over with a short, milk-white down which added to the whiteness of their skins. The men would have white bristles for beards, though they would usually pluck these out. The down, however, all over their bodies they never tried to get rid of. The hair of their head, which was milk-white also, was fine and silky, and inclined to a curl at its terminations. They were moon-eyed, and did not see so well as the other Indians, their eyes being weak. They were only at their best in the moonlight, "when they were all life and activity, running abroad and skipping about like wild bucks".

through the great woods, they peeped at the Spaniards from behind the broad tree trunks, "they not seeing us". Wafer describes their manner of getting gold, which was that, indeed, followed by most of the early pioneers. They had little wooden dishes, which they dipped softly into the water, taking them up half-full of sand. These were shaken, and the sand rising with the water, passed over the brim of the dish, leaving the heavier gold settled at the bottom. The ore was then taken out, dried in the sun, and pounded in a mortar, after which it was set out on paper and a lodestone or magnet was moved over it. This drew out all the iron and left the gold, clean of iron admixture. Finally the grains of gold were dropped into gourds or calabashes. In this way the Spaniards and their slaves would work for three months during the dry season immediately following the rains. It was these great rains that washed the gold down from the rocks of the mountains into the river sand below.<sup>1</sup>

As the weeks went by it seems to have occurred to Wafer that Lacenta had grown too fond of his company, and was not willing that he should return to England; and having acquired a good deal of the Amerindian language talked by these people, he pointed out to his host how often he, Lacenta, would succeed (instead of failing) in his hunting of deer and wild pigs "if only he possessed English dogs". He promised, if he were allowed to go to England, he would return with hunting dogs for Lacenta. The latter accepted this proposition, and the next day

<sup>1</sup> Dampier wrote of these mines in the Darien district: "Hereabouts was the river of Santa Maria, navigable for some distance upstream, near to which were the rich gold mines of Santa Maria. These gold mines were worked by slaves—Negroes and Indians—and besides the alluvial gold obtained from the sands, great gold nuggets were found in the rocks, and had to be extracted by iron pickaxes". There are numerous mentions in seventeenth and early eighteenth century literature of the gold mines of Darien. Nothing seems to be heard of them now.

Wafer and his four companions were sent northwards towards the Atlantic under the convoy of seven Indian men, with four women to carry their provisions and Wafer's clothes, which consisted of a linen smock and a pair of breeches. These were being carefully preserved, so that their owner might put them on when he came to the vicinity of Europeans. Meantime he went about as the Indians did, absolutely naked and with a painted skin. He would not permit himself to be tatued, but allowed his native friends to lay the paint on in spots.

They travelled over many high mountains, at last coming to one surpassing the rest in height, which took them four days to climb. On the top Wafer perceived a strange giddiness in his head, as did also the Indian guides and the four English seamen. They passed over a ridge so narrow that they were forced to straddle across it, sitting down. At length they began to descend, and then were rid of this disagreeable mountain sickness. On the other side of the mountain they soon reached the sea-coast, the Atlantic shore, and here they were met by forty of the best people of the Indians in the vicinity, who congratulated them on their coming and welcomed them to their houses.

These were all dressed in their finest robes—long white gowns to the ankles, with fringes at the bottom—and had pikes and halberds in their hands. But there were no ships in sight, and after anxiously enquiring for them of the Amerindians, a native conjurer was sent for “to enquire of the Devil what time a ship would arrive”. This consulting the oracle had to be conducted in a screened-off apartment, and the Europeans outside it could hear the “pawawers” (as Wafer called the priests) uttering the most hideous howlings and shrieks and imitating the voices

## Dampier, Wafer, and Pirate Captains 251

of all kinds of birds and beasts. Joined to this noise were the sounds of several stones struck together, of conch shells, beating of drums made of hollow bamboos, and the jarring of strings fastened to the larger bones of beasts. Every now and then a "medicine man" would make one dreadful exclamation and clatter, and there would be a sudden pause and a profound silence. Finding, after a considerable time, no answer was come from their god, they concluded it was because the Europeans were about the house, so turned them away and went to work again. After another hour, no response being obtained, a fresh search was made, and the Englishmen's clothes were found to be hanging against the wall. These were at once thrown out-of-doors to a great distance, and then the diviners fell once more to their "pawawing". After a little while they all came out with their answer, "in a muck of sweat, so that first of all they went down to the river and washed themselves" before delivering an oracle to this effect: that the tenth day from that time there would arrive two ships, and that on the morning of the tenth day they would hear one gun and then another at a little interval of time; that one of the Englishmen would die soon afterwards; and that, going on board, the white men would lose one of their guns. All of which fell out exactly as predicted, wrote Wafer some years later. For on the tenth day in the morning they heard the guns, first one and then another: one of their guns or "fusees" was lost on going on board the ships; the five Englishmen and three of the Indians went off to the ships in a canoe, but as they crossed the bar of the river it overturned and Gopson was nearly drowned, and though they recovered him out of the water he lost his gun, according to the prediction.

So it came about that at last they got on board an English sloop, which was accompanied by a Spanish prize taken a few days before, and rejoined Dampier and others of the gallant "forty-four" at the mouth of the River Concepcion. "For this was another particular they told us when they were 'pawawing', that when their oracle had informed them that two vessels were to arrive about this time they understood from the answer that one of them was to be an English one, but as to the other the oracle spoke so dubiously that they were much afraid it would be a Spanish ship. We went on board the English sloop and our Indian friends with us, and were received with a very hearty welcome." The four Englishmen with Wafer were instantly recognized and embraced by the ship's crew, but Wafer sat a while "cringing upon his hands like the Indians, painted as they were, and naked, and with his nose-beads hanging over his mouth,<sup>1</sup> wishing to try if they knew him in this disguise". It was the better part of an hour before one of the crew, looking more narrowly upon him, cried out: "Why, here's our doctor!" And immediately they all congratulated him upon his arrival. But it was nearly a month before he could get tolerably rid of the paint, so long had his skin been stained with it.

As to Gopson, though he was brought alive to the ship, he did not recover his drenching in the water, and after lingering for about three days, died, so that his death verified another part of the pawawers' prediction. Lacenta had accompanied the young surgeon (who at the

<sup>1</sup> Described by Dampier as "all naked except round the waist, but painted red, yellow, and blue, very bright and lovely, with a nose-piece of thin gold hanging over his mouth".

## Dampier, Wafer, and Pirate Captains 253

time of this adventure was only twenty years of age) to the seashore, and now parted with him most regretfully, having hoped at one time that he would settle in his country as his son-in-law. In spite of regrets, however, the Indians had a happy time, for the grateful Englishmen entertained them lavishly before sailing away to renew their buccaneering exploits.

Some 9 or 10 miles distant from the mouth of the River Concepcion, where the reunion between Wafer and Dampier had taken place, there were the cays or islets<sup>1</sup> now known as the San Blas or Mulatas archipelago. These were formerly a famous haunt of English and French pirates, and here Dampier and his companions found at anchor eight pirate ships, four of them English, one with a mixed crew of English and Dutch, and three of them French. These vessels were assembled to concert plans for marching overland and taking Panamá. But after questioning Dampier and his party the pirate captains decided that it would be best to go with all the fleet to Sant' Andreas or St. Andrews, a small uninhabited island lying to the south of old Providence Island. Sant' Andreas was, with its attendant islets, the most southerly of three groups of cays, islands, and sandbanks in the Caribbean Sea, which lie at an average distance of about 140 miles from the Mosquito coast of Nicaragua. The centre group was the once famous Providence Island. Sant' Andreas was celebrated in those days for its forests of "cedars" (in reality a species of juniper). These "red cedars" are described by Dampier as being the largest he ever knew or heard of, with trunks from 40 to 70 feet long between the roots and the bifurcation of

<sup>1</sup> The word *cay* (Spanish, *cayo*; American-English, *key*) is used to indicate an exposed coral reef or low flat coral islet, a flat sandy islet or shoal.

the branches. The periaguas and canoes that were made of this red cedar wood were the best of any. The canoes were little else than dug-outs, simply the trunk of the tree hollowed, the canoe being sharp at both ends, whilst the periagua was squared at the stern. Dampier had travelled to Andreas Island on a French ship, but disliked the French seamen, who were constantly seasick, so that he and his companions, when they found that a certain Captain Wright had just arrived with a Spanish prize, proposed that this vessel should be fitted up as a fighting ship and be manned by the English of Dampier's party: a proposal eventually agreed to and carried out. After this, parting company with the Frenchmen, they crossed over to the Mosquito coast and entered the Blewfields River. This, we are informed by Dampier, was named after the famous privateer, Captain Blewfields, who made his headquarters at Providence Island about 1640-50.

From the Mosquito coast Dampier, in the ship of Captain Wright, and accompanied by the other English privateers, sailed to Bocas del Toro, the opening to a vast lagoon, studded with islands, off the mountainous north-west coast of the Panamá Isthmus. This was a place that the privateers much resorted to, because on the shores of the islands valuable green turtle might be had. It was also a capital resort for careening and repairing ships. Nevertheless the Indians of the mainland not only would have nothing to do with the Spaniards, and had not been conquered, but were also very truculent towards the privateers, having frequently murdered those who had camped out on shore. Dampier noted that in the forests of the mainland the Vanilla orchis grew in great quantity, the roots of which were used for flavouring chocolate

## Dampier, Wafer, and Pirate Captains 255

Back in the San Blas archipelago once more, they used their Mosquito Indians to spear turtle or to assist them in hunting on the islands or mainland peccary, warri (the large white-lipped peccary), and deer; or to pursue a drove of large fat monkeys; or to shoot guans, curassows, pigeons, parrots, or turtle-doves. In this way they lived very well on the wild products of the country, not staying long in any one place, but most often at the islands where there grew great groves of sapodillas, "a sort of fruit much like a pear, but more juicy".<sup>1</sup> Under these trees they found plenty of red Soldier land-crabs—very toothsome food, except when the crabs had been feeding on manchineal, after which they became poisonous.

After entering the Gulf of Oruba and passing the site of the future "Darien" colony the little fleet cruised along the north coast of South America, peering anxiously at Cartagena and having a fair view of Nuestra Señora de Popa, a monastery dedicated to the Virgin Mary, standing at the top of a very steep hill just behind Cartagena; said to be a place of incredible wealth by reason of the offerings made here continually. For this reason the monastery was often in danger of being visited by the privateers, had not the neighbourhood of Cartagena kept them in awe.<sup>2</sup>

Dampier was greatly impressed with the wonderful

<sup>1</sup> The Sapodilla tree (*Achras sapota*) is a member of the *Sapotaceæ* order, to which the well-known "Star apple" of the West Indies also belongs. The sapodilla grows to a considerable height, has large leathery leaves, large flowers, and apple-shaped fruits which are singularly luscious and juicy.

<sup>2</sup> "'Tis, in short, the very Loretto of the West Indies: it hath innumerable miracles related of it. Any misfortune that befalls the privateers is attributed to this lady's doing; and the Spaniards report that she was abroad that night the Oxford man-of-war was blown up at the Isle of Vaca near Hispaniola, and that she came home all wet; as, belike, she often returns with her clothes dirty and torn with passing through woods and bad ways when she has been out upon any expedition; deserving doubtless a new suit for such eminent pieces of service."—*Dampier*.



mountain of Santa Marta, a lofty, snowy peak which rises up near the seacoast behind the town of that name. It is (as the present writer can testify) a most impressive sight. It is 16,700 feet above sea level, being crowned for the last 1700 feet with glittering snow. Then they visited the pearl banks.<sup>1</sup> Off this coast they captured a ship of twelve guns and forty men, laden with sugar and tobacco, with 8 to 10 tons of marmalade (quince or guava preserve) on board, sailing from Cuba to Cartagena. Then they visited the Island of Curaçao, a fifty-year-old Dutch possession, where they offered the captured sugar of the Spanish prize for sale. But the prudent governor of Curaçao decided to have no truck with them, the Dutch being now at peace with the Spaniards and a good trade between them having sprung up. However, he offered, if they would go as far afield as the Danish Island of St. Thomas, to send a ship after them to buy and take away the sugar. But this was not agreed to. The Island of Curaçao, then as now, was the chief headquarters of Dutch trade with the West Indies

<sup>1</sup> "The pearl banks lie about 4 or 5 leagues off from the shore, as I have been told; thither the fishing barks go and anchor; then the divers go down to the bottom, and fill a basket (which is let down before) with oysters; and when they come up, others go down, two at a time; this they do till the bark is full, and then go ashore, where the old men, women, and children of the Indians open the oysters, there being a Spanish overseer to look after the pearl. Yet these Indians do very often secure the best pearl for themselves, as many Jamaica men can testify who daily trade with them. The meat they string up, and hang it a-drying."

Dampier further describes the pearl oysters as growing on the rocks below the water level, and being flatter and thinner in shape than the edible oyster, with flesh that was not wholesome, but disagreeably slimy and tasting of copper. Nevertheless, the flesh of these pearl oysters was eaten by the Spaniards after it had been gathered and dried by Amerindians. The pearls were found at the head of the oyster, lying between the meat and the shell. In some shells there would be as many as twenty or thirty small seed pearls, while other oysters might have only one or two large pearls. The colour on the inside of the shell was, in Dampier's eyes, more glorious than the pearl itself.

There is a Catholic church at Colon, on the Isthmus of Panamá, the steeple and walls of which are decorated with the shells of these pearl oysters stuck in line, and although the effect is rather strange, it is also beautiful when the sunlight brings out the delicate rainbow tints of the mother-of-pearl.—*H. H. I.*





and the north coast of South America. It had recently narrowly escaped capture by a very strong French fleet, the possession being much desired by the King of France; but through an accident fortunate to the Dutch, the fleet, which was partly manned with Englishmen, was completely wrecked on a reef off the Aves Islands hard by, only two ships escaping. These Dutch Islands of Oruba, Curaçao, and Buen Ayre were much used then for the breeding of cattle, goats, and horses.

From Buen Ayre the pirate fleet, with Dampier on board, passed on to the Islands of Aves, or Birds, named from the enormous number of frigate birds, gannets, terns, noddies, and tropic birds which frequented them for breeding, some of them on low trees or bushes, others on the ground. From the Aves they passed on to a small island called La Tortuga, at no great distance from the Venezuelan coast, a place much frequented for salt, which was obtained from a large pond within 200 yards of the sea, where the imprisoned sea water gradually dried up into salt under the rays of the sun. The buccaneers or pirates would often resort here to keep Christmas, because they would meet at this place merchant ships loading up with salt and ready to do business in the purchase, sale, or exchange of commodities.

From Tortuga Island they sailed northwards through the more open sea to the Island of Blanquilla. Although this island was at some distance from the mainland, it was in those days swarming with iguana lizards. It was a flat, low, uninhabited island, dry and healthy, consisting mostly of meadows of long grass, dotted with shrubs and *lignum vitæ* trees. The iguanas were of different colours, almost black, dark brown, light brown, dark green, light green, yellow, and speckled, living as well in the water as

on land, some of them being constantly in the water, others inhabiting the rocks (these were generally black in colour), others frequenting swampy ground or climbing up the trees and bushes (these were green). Those on the dry ground were ordinarily yellow in colour. Probably Dampier saw two kinds of iguana in all,<sup>1</sup> one of them mostly frequenting the water, and the other the land. He describes their eggs as being very good to eat, and their flesh so much esteemed by the buccaneers that it was generally reserved for sick men, as it made excellent broth.

From Blanquilla they sailed back to Tortuga, where their men became very drunk and quarrelsome, and then on to the coast of Venezuela, off Caracas. This coast is described as being a continuous tract of high ridges of hills interspersed with small, narrow valleys of extreme fertility, while the hills were mostly barren. This region was inhabited somewhat thickly by Spaniards with large numbers of negro slaves. They had rich plantations of maize and bananas, and they kept tame curassows and many pigs. But the chief product then (as now) was the cacao tree, from which are obtained the seeds that make chocolate. The nuts from the cacao grown here were so full of oil that the Spaniards were obliged to parch or burn them and partially dry them before they were pounded into chocolate, otherwise they would have been too rich

<sup>1</sup> Possibly there may have been one or more species of iguana seen by Dampier which are now extinct. The true iguanas or vegetarian lizards of the West India Islands, and central and northern South America, are of two species, *Iguana tuberculata* and *I. rhinolophus*—large lizards, often 6 feet long, and wonderfully decorated with frills, dewlaps, horns, and tubercles. Other allied, large, herbivorous lizards of the same region are the three-horned *Metopoceros* of Haiti, and the spiny-tailed iguana (*Ctenosaura*) of northern South America. There are no "Iguanas" in either Africa or Asia (except Madagascar and Fiji), but the name is misapplied to the Monitor lizards.

for easy digestion. Dampier was sufficiently well informed even at that early date to realize that the finest chocolate in the world comes from Guayaquil, on the coast of Ecuador. He writes two or three pages on the subject of the valuable properties of chocolate, which seems to have been a favourite food with these fierce pirates. From the coast of Venezuela he sailed with his companions to the colony of Virginia, in North America, and from there proceeded on the great voyage which took him round the extremity of South America into the Pacific Ocean, and ultimately led him to Australasia.

## CHAPTER X

### Dampier's Second Voyage to the Pacific Coast

DAMPIER started on his second voyage to the Pacific on 23 August, 1683, from Accomac (Chesapeake Bay), in the *Batchelor's Delight*, a French ship now renamed under the command of a privateer captain, JOHN COOK. The consort ship of the expedition was the *Revenge*, commanded by EDWARD DAVIS. Both were French prizes taken by Cook and Davis. The account of how this John Cook—who probably held no commission and was only a decent-living pirate, born at St. Christopher, in the Leeward Islands—captured the vessels in which this amazing voyage was made, cannot be related here, but must be read in Dampier's pages. Lionel Wafer, as surgeon, accompanied Captain Cook, and the crew consisted in all of seventy men. Much of this voyage into the Pacific has already been described in my account of the *Pioneers in Australasia*.

It will be remembered, by those who have read that work, that these pirates voyaged from North America to the Cape Verde Islands, Sherbro in West Africa, and thence sailed, without stopping, across the South Atlantic to the Falkland Islands (then known by the name of Sebald de Wart Islands, after a Dutch navigator).<sup>1</sup> They

<sup>1</sup> Although Sir Francis Drake continued the exploring work of Magellan, and first suggested that there was a great expanse of sea south of Tierra del Fuego, it must not be forgotten that the gallant Dutch seamen of the early seventeenth century, JACOB LE MAIRE and WILLEM SCHOUTER, proved for a fact the termination of South America in that direction, and abolished the notion of an Antarctic continent begin-

arrived here in the middle of the Southern summer, January 28 (1684), and failed to find fresh water, but saw in the sea round about the islands great shoals of small langoustes ("lobsters"), which coloured the sea red in places for over a square mile. The seamen dipped buckets into the sea and drew up quantities of these large prawn-like crustaceans. They were only 2 to 3 inches long and had big claws, looking in fact much more like dwarf lobsters than prawns or shrimps.

Passing between Staten Island and the mainland they rounded Cape Horn with the usual violent storm, and then fell in with another ship coming from the south, which turned out to be the *Nicolas*, a vessel sent purposely from London to the South Seas under a Captain Eaton, and, like the *Batchelor's Delight* and the *Revenge*, bound for Juan Fernandez. The three ships in company sailed away from Juan Fernandez on 8 April, 1684, to prey on the Spanish shipping off the west coast of South America. As they neared the mainland of this continent along the coast of Chile (keeping at a distance of between 30 and 40 miles from the shore, not to be seen by the Spaniards on land), they noted the prodigious height of the great range of the Andes. [The mountains rose in a succession

ning on the southern side of Magellan's Straits. Le Maire and Schouter in 1616 discovered and named Staten Island and the islet of Cape Horn.

The Falkland Islands, first sighted by JOHN DAVIS in 1591-2, were next explored in 1598 by the Dutch navigator, SEBALD DE WERT (or Wart). They were again examined in 1690 by an English ship trading to the South Seas under the command of Captain Strong, who named one of the channels between the two islands "Falkland Sound". In 1765, Commander Byron annexed them to the British dominions, but previously attempts were made by both French and Spanish expeditions to secure them for their respective countries. In 1771, however, Spain recognized the British claim over the Falkland Islands, but actual British colonization and government did not begin till 1833. Meantime they were increasingly visited by whaling ships, and ultimately claimed by Buenos Aires and by the United States. They are now a prosperous British colony, with over 2000 inhabitants mainly of Scotch descent, and chiefly concerned in the breeding of sheep.



of three or four parallel ridges to the shore, undimmed by any fog, to altitudes (as we know) of 18,000 to 23,000 feet. In the opinion of Dampier, who knew nothing about the Himalayas, they were the highest mountains in the world.] In the southern latitude of  $9^{\circ} 40'$  they captured a Spanish prize, a ship sailing from Guayaquil in Ecuador to Lima in Peru, laden with timber. The three English pirate vessels then sailed for the Lobos Islands, off the north coast of Peru—two islets each about a mile round, separated by a narrow channel, but containing a small sandy bay, well sheltered from the winds, where ships might careen. The islands were uninhabited, though their coasts were much frequented by Amerindian fishermen. They were situated about 15 miles from the mainland of Peru, and were a very handy port of call for the buccaneers. The ground of the islets was rocky and sandy, without any fresh water, trees, shrubs, grasses, or herbs; or any land animals except the seals and sea-lions which came ashore here to breed. But they were frequented by multitudes of sea birds—penguins, gannets, terns, and gulls. There seem also to have been seed-snipe<sup>1</sup> or land birds of a plover-like type, whose flesh, in the opinion of Dampier, “made good, sweet meat”. In this shelter the pirates careened their ships and scrubbed their encrusted sides, besides examining at leisure the Spanish prisoners taken in the timber ship. From these they collected all the information obtainable regarding the comparative wealth of the towns along the coasts; with the result that they decided to make next for the town of Truxillo, on the coast of Peru.

They could muster, in all, 108 men fit for service

<sup>1</sup> *Thinocorys*: the seed-snipe, *Attagis* and *Thinocorys*, form a distinct family of the plover order, related remotely to the gallinaceous birds and to sand grouse.

(putting on one side those that were sick). Just as they were about to start, three ships were descried sailing away to the north, one between the island and the continent, and the others out from the ocean. Cook's and Davis's ships went in chase, and Captain Eaton, whose ship, the *Nicolas*, drew less than the other two, sailed after the two ships between the western islet and the rocks into the open sea. The *Batchelor's Delight* chased the Spanish vessel that was on the landward side and soon took it, bringing it back to the anchorage. Captain Eaton meantime had captured both of the others. These ships were deeply laden with flour, and bound for Panamá. On board the biggest of the three they found a letter from the Viceroy of Lima to the President of Council of Panamá, informing him that pirates had again come into the South Sea, and for that reason he was sending him a good supply of flour, so that his newly built city might, if necessary, stand a siege. In this ship were likewise some 8 tons of quince marmalade and a stately mule, which was destined for the President of Panamá, together with a very large image of the Virgin Mary in wood, carved and painted, to adorn the new cathedral at that place. Far more beautiful in the eyes of these pirates, however, would have been the 800,000 "pieces of eight" (silver dollars) which this great ship was carrying also to Panamá; only that, unhappily for the pirates, whilst she lay off the coast of northern Peru, taking in her load of flour, the news reached the merchants there that a famous pirate, Captain Swan, had been seen off Valdivia. Consequently this great treasure was carried on shore and safely stored, and the three pirate captains had to be contented with the flour and quince marmalade.

From their prisoners Dampier's companions learnt that the Spaniards of Truxillo (in northern Peru) were building

a fort at Guanchaco (its seaport) purposely to hinder the designs of any pirate that should attempt to land there. On getting this news, therefore, Dampier's comrades thought it better to avoid Truxillo till the Spanish activity—easily lulled—should have abated. They sailed instead to the Galápagos archipelago, conveying their three best prizes with them, laden with flour, but leaving behind, hidden at the Lobos Islets, the first-captured ship, which only contained timber.

The Galápagos archipelago<sup>1</sup> in Dampier's day, and for nearly two centuries afterwards, was uninhabited by man. This group of oceanic islands consists of fifteen islands, large and small, lying exactly under the Equator at an average distance of 580 miles westward from the coast of Ecuador. The easternmost of these islands are described by Dampier as being rocky, barren, and hilly, producing no trees and little herbage or grass, but many cacti. The cactus which he found most noteworthy, as producing the greatest effect on the landscape, was *Cereus erectus*, a plant growing from 10 to 12 feet high, like a straight, erect column, of a more or less bright green with a reddish top, and covered all the way up from root to top with sharp spines growing in thick rows. The western Galápagos, on the other hand, were low, with fertile soil, and produced tall trees of a diversity of species. The mould here (wrote Dampier) was deep and black, and there were big rivers and many brooks of good water. But the most striking feature of these islands was their reptile inhabitants, and especially the huge tortoises,<sup>2</sup> the Spanish word

<sup>1</sup> Situated about 580 miles due west of the Ecuador coast. Since 1832 they have belonged to Ecuador, though they were in their history almost entirely made known by English travellers. Several of them are as large as a small English county, their total land area being 2870 square miles. They were visited and admirably described in 1833 by the great biologist, CHARLES DARWIN, in H.M.S. *Beagle*.

<sup>2</sup> They were all of the one genus, *Testudo*, which includes amongst its numerous

for which—Galápago—was the origin of the name given to the archipelago.

These tortoises in Dampier's day were so numerous that from five to six hundred men might subsist on them alone for several months without any other kind of provision. Their bodies contained much fat, and their flesh was like that of a chicken and of a most agreeable flavour. The largest of them would weigh between 150 and 200 pounds. Nearly every island had its separate local species of tortoise. But there were also great iguanas of two sorts; some, about 4 feet long, living in the sea water and on the seashore,<sup>1</sup> and others (a little smaller) confined to the land.<sup>2</sup> Then there were at least four kinds of sea turtle: one, the very distinct leathery turtle (*Spargis coriacea*), the carapace of which is strengthened by minute tessellated bones covered with leathery skin; and the three sorts of real turtle, the Loggerhead (*Thalassochelys*), which smells very strongly of musk, and is quite uneatable, and two forms of the genus *Chelone*. These last were the Hawk's-bill turtle (*Chelone imbricata*), whose shell supplies the famous tortoise shell of commerce, whose eggs are considered most delicious to eat, but whose flesh is generally unwholesome, probably on account of its diet; and the Green turtle (*Chelone mydas*), of world-wide fame for its flesh and fat and the delicious and nourishing soup which can be made from it. According to Dampier, the buccaneers also found harmless green snakes on these islands (possibly of the Boa family); but there was no form of mammal, though there were many birds, chiefly pigeons and finches. At the Galápagos they

species the little Mediterranean tortoise or our gardens. There is only one species of *Testudo* on the mainland of South America, and there are only two or three species of this genus of true tortoises in North and Central America. But there are the fossil remains in North America of gigantic tortoises which may have been the ancestors of the Galápagos forms.

<sup>1</sup> *Amphyrhincus*.

<sup>2</sup> *Conolophus*.

stored in a hiding place a great many bags of flour and a store of "sweetmeats"—possibly chocolate and sugar.

Then the ships sailed over to the Island of Cocos, off the coast of Panamá, where they buried more flour, and from there made their way to Cape Blanco, on the coast of Nicaragua. Before reaching this point Captain John Cook, of the *Batchelor's Delight* (Dampier's ship), who had been ill for some months, died suddenly. Why they should have been so anxious to bury him on shore it is not easy to understand, especially as in so doing they were obliged to sustain a running fight with the Spaniards, which nearly ended in utter disaster to the ships' crews. Then four ships (that is to say, the *Batchelor's Delight*, the *Revenge*, the *Nicolas* of Captain Eaton, and one of the Spanish prizes brought from Galápagos) sailed for Realejo (north-west Nicaragua). This was a town situated in a very volcanic region, close by a lofty, active volcano, rising to a peaked summit, which smoked all day and in the night sent forth flames of fire. Realejo town was a little distance inland, approached by two narrow creeks through the mud and mangroves. On the banks of these creeks,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles below the town, the Spaniards had cast up a strong breastwork; and on account of the general readiness of the Spaniards to receive them the pirates thought it better to go somewhere else. They therefore entered the Gulf of Amapala, off the south coast of Honduras. In this gulf there were two lofty islands. One of these was Amapala, which contained a Spanish town on a tableland at the top of a hill, the path to it so steep and rocky that any attack might be warded off by hurling stones on the ascending party. Here there was a big church standing in the middle of the town, which contained statues of the Virgin Mary and other saints, their faces and hands painted of an Indian com-

plexion, and the dress in the style of the native costume. The Amerindians of this place (Amapala) were extremely poor, yet very contented, no Spaniards living amongst them except a friar or missionary. This man, according to established customs, was maintained by tithes, the natives having to pay him a tenth part of everything they possessed. He looked very sharply after his interests, "and knew to a peck how much corn each man had stored, and how many fowls he had". The friar, however, spoke their language, and seems to have given them good advice on occasion, and certainly was there to protect them against Spanish rapacity. This missionary was seized by Captain Davis, together with two Indian boys, to be used as guides and hostages. One of the Spanish-speaking Indians who was captured was a petty official, called "the Secretary of the Islands", who worked under the local Indian chief or *cacique*. This secretary, however, had no great liking for the Spaniards, and advised his fellow countrymen not to run away from the English strangers who had arrived in ships and canoes, as they were not enemies to the Indians but to the Spaniards.

As to Captain Davis and his men, they gave themselves out to be Basque sailors sent thither by the King of Spain to clear the seas of English pirates, and said they were only bringing their ships to Amapala to careen and repair them. The natives then said they were very welcome, for the Basque people seem to have been much more popular amongst the Amerindians than the rest of the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the Indian chief and his secretary embraced Captain Davis and his men and received them with a great deal of affection. These consultations being

<sup>1</sup> The type most detested was the Andaluz, from the south of Spain, who was far more cruel than the other people of the peninsula.

ended, all parties marched towards the church, for that was the place for public meetings. And here a sort of concert was given to them, with abundance of musical "hautboys and strum-strums" (flutes and guitars). The concert was, however, a melancholy affair, the songs being all doleful, probably "because these Amerindians were made very sad in contemplating the state of slavery in which they lived under the Spaniards". "They had never forgotten their ancient freedom or ceased to regret the dreadful woes which had come on their country by the arrival of these white men." Captain Davis had intended, when all the people were in the church, to have the doors shut, and then force some kind of bargain on them—if possible by making fair promises. Apparently the friar joined with him in the scheme. But before all had got into the church one of the seamen pushed an Indian to hasten him into the church. The Indian immediately ran away, and all the rest, taking alarm, sprang out of the church "like deer", and Captain Davis—who knew nothing of what had happened—was left alone in the church with the Spanish friar. The seamen with Captain Davis (showing that these Englishmen were no better than the Spaniards) actually turned round on the unfortunate secretary—the educated Spanish-speaking Indian—and killed him with their muskets, an abominable crime which Dampier merely calls "the indiscretion of one foolish fellow". However, in spite of this outrage, others amongst the natives remained friendly towards the Englishmen, and piloted them to an island where they were able to kill as much cattle as they wanted, "for which services they were satisfied to their hearts' content".

At Amapala, after cleaning the ships, filling them up with fresh water, and dividing the sacks of flour, Davis and Eaton "broke off consort" with the other ships. The

Spanish prize, which had been brought to this place loaded with flour, was left behind as a present to the Indians, together with a large stock of flour which the pirates could not carry away. The *Batchelor's Delight* and *Revenge* sailed south to the island of Plata, made famous by Sir Francis Drake and his capture, off this place, of the *Cacafuego*. From here they steered for Point St. Elena—a sterile, unattractive region, without trees or grass, but with abundance of water melons, which were large and very sweet. Not far from the Indian village of Santa Elena, and close to the sea beach, was one of those lakes or deposits of bitumen<sup>1</sup> which are so commonly met with in Tropical America. This pitch at times of high tide boiled up out of a little hole in the earth. It was eagerly collected by the Indians and stored in jars, and of course was a good deal used by the Spaniards for caulking their ships.

Whilst lying off the Island of Plata, and preying on all the small vessels that came within their reach, they were joined by CAPTAIN SWAN in the *Cygnets*, from London. This ship had been fitted out by eminent merchants of that city with a design to avoid piracy, and only to trade with the Spaniards or Indians; and a very considerable cargo had been carefully selected for this commerce. But Captain Swan had, apparently, turned pirate, or, as he called it, privateer, finding the simple rôle of trader impossible under the Spanish regulations. Just previously he had been obliged by his men to give hospitality on board his

<sup>1</sup> Manjack was a sort of pitch, or bitumen, which was found in lumps from 3 or 4 to 30 pounds in weight, washed up by the sea and left dry on all the sandy bays of this coast. It was in substance like pitch, but blacker, and melted with the heat of the sun. Dampier further describes it as being not so pleasant smelling as pitch, and much inclined to peel off the seams and sides of ships in the sea water. However, tempered with oil or tallow, it proved a sufficiently good material for caulking seams.



ship to a company of privateers, which had come overland, under the command of a certain Captain Peter Harris, from the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of Darien. Swan having agreed to join company with Davis and play the pirate, it was necessary to make room for these additional men. Consequently the fine London cargo was had up on deck, and as much as possible was sold on trust to Dampier and his companions, as well as to the men on board the *Cygnet*. "The rest was thrown overboard into the sea, except fine goods, as silks, muslins, stockings, &c., and except the iron, which was saved for ballast." The succeeding weeks were passed in petty piracies, in the course of which the *Batchelor's Delight* visited several coast towns of northern Peru. Here Dampier noted that the houses were built of very large mud bricks compounded of earth and straw, kneaded together, 2 feet broad and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick. These bricks were never burnt with fire, but left for a long time to dry in the sun, because in this region it very seldom rained. For this reason the houses were seldom roofed, but had poles laid across the walls from side to side, which were covered with mats. All the timber used in the construction of houses in Peru had to be brought from Guayaquil (Ecuador), because the coast lands of Peru were rainless and without any timber. The walls of churches and houses were whitened with lime, the doors and posts were very large and adorned with carved work, and the inside of the houses was hung round with rich embroidered, painted cloths, while every house or church of any pretensions had pictures on the walls brought thither from Spain.

Dampier was much struck when visiting northern Peru with the remarkable seafaring rafts (balsas or "bark logs") on which the Amerindian fishermen went out to sea. These

rafts were made of many round logs of wood, and if constructed for transport purposes, and not merely for fishing, consisted in their lower stage of thirty great trees of an average of 30 feet in length, fastened together side by side. On the top of these was placed a shorter row of trees across them, pinned fast to each other and then pinned to the underneath row. This double row of logs made the bottom of the float, and was of a considerable breadth. From this bottom the raft was raised about 10 feet higher with rows of posts, sometimes set upright and supporting one or more decks or rooms. On the lowest deck of all were stored great stones for ballast and jars of fresh water, and such goods as would not suffer from being splashed by the waves, for the bottom story of the whole vessel was sunk so deep (though its sides were waterproof) as to lie 2 or 3 feet below the surface of the water. On the second deck the seamen lived, with their food and other necessities, and above this middle deck the more precious goods were stored to a height of 8 or 10 feet. On the uppermost deck the steersman took his place and worked a very large rudder; and in the bow a clay hearth was made on which a fire burnt for cooking the men's food, especially on long voyages. In the middle of the whole vessel rose a mast to which a large sail was fastened. According to Dampier, these extraordinary rafts, which would carry 60 to 70 tons of goods, were practically unsinkable at sea, and only in danger when off rocks and shoals. They were able to sail up and down the coast going before the wind, because very often the wind would blow from north to south out at sea, and in the reverse direction close inshore.

It would be wearisome and unnecessary for the purpose of this book to recount all the piratical episodes of this cruise up and down the coasts of Ecuador and northern

Peru of the *Batchelor's Delight*, the *Revenge*, and the *Cygnets*. It is sufficient to say that amongst other Spanish towns they attempted to take and plunder was Guayaquil, the coast capital of Ecuador, even then a place of great importance in the South Seas, exporting cacao, hides, tallow, sarsaparilla, and other drugs, and woollen cloth (made from the hair of the vicuña or small mountain llama). But their attack on the town with forty to fifty rather tired and not over-eager pirates failed. However, they recouped themselves by capturing Spanish vessels from Panamá loaded with over a thousand Negroes, men and women. Davis and Swan—neither of them cast in the heroic mould as plundering pirates—contented themselves by selecting about forty of the strongest Negro men, and turned all the others adrift to go where they pleased.

Here it seemed to Dampier, writing of it afterwards, that his leaders missed a great opportunity from faint-heartedness. In these thousand Negroes—men *and* women—they possessed willing slaves and soldiers, only too ready to turn against the Spaniard. And he considered that they ought to have also made use of the deadly hatred of the Amerindian towards the Spaniard, and together with natives and Negroes have seized the whole country (which we now call “Ecuador”), being well able with their ships and supplies to hold it against all the forces that the Spaniards of Peru could bring; opening up communications with the Atlantic and attracting to their assistance and co-operation thousands of privateers from Jamaica and the French West Indies. In this way, at this time (the end of the seventeenth century), they might have become masters not only of the mines of Colombia (“the richest gold mines ever yet found in America”), but of a great

empire in gradual development. There is little doubt that, if at that period in the history of America and of Europe a resolute band of pirates had taken action on the lines that Dampier probably suggested to the faint-hearted Davis and Swan, such a result might have been achieved. English and French, whether or not their Governments might be warring together in Europe, were friends and allies in the seas of Tropical America in their common desire to plunder the Spaniard. The Spaniards were, as a rule, poor fighters, and the hatred of the native Americans against them was so intense (as also was that of their runaway Maroon Negroes) that they would have been easily overwhelmed if a few resolute men of the north had led these forces against them; while the intervention of the British and French Governments—eager to secure a splendid empire in the New World—would have put it beyond the power of Spain to send fleets of war vessels across the Atlantic to dislodge the British and French privateers from the waist of Central America.

But this project remained what Dampier called it, "a golden dream", until in the course of history there had arisen in North America a nation so powerful and so numerous that it has been able to forbid to the rest of the world any schemes of conquest over the lands so miserably used by the Spaniard. Thus we see regions better endowed with natural wealth than any other part of the globe's surface, with fertile soil, and peopled (so far as the indigenous population is concerned) by a human race only anxious to live peaceably and industriously under good government, still a prey to misrule, confusion, dishonesty in finance, bigotry in religion, and governed by a cruel, hybrid type which can tolerate or perpetrate such frightful atrocities as those

## 274      Pioneers in Tropical America

of the Putumayo rubber forests, revealed to a horrified world in 1912.

That the Spaniards themselves anticipated at this period some such action as that imagined by Dampier, is evident from the intercepted correspondence passing between Spain and Peru at the close of the seventeenth century.

## CHAPTER XI

### Darien

AFTER the failure to take Guayaquil, the privateers, with Dampier amongst them, spent two years cruising up and down the Pacific coast, from Ecuador to Lower California, making mostly futile attacks on the big towns, and failing to plunder the great Spanish treasure fleet, though they boldly attempted to do so with 10 ships and 960 men against 14 ships manned by 3000 Spaniards. In August, 1685, Dampier changed his service with Captain Davis for a place in Captain Swan's ship, the *Cygnnet*, because Davis wanted to revisit Peru, and Dampier, in his thirst for knowledge, now wished to see something of northern Mexico and thence return to England by way of the East Indies, the course which Swan proposed to take in the *Cygnnet*. Accordingly, in April, 1686, he passes out of this history, in leaving Cape Corrientes in Mexico for the Caroline Islands; and the remainder of his experiences on this remarkable voyage round the world of more than twelve years' duration are described in the volume of this series which deals with *Pioneers in Australasia*.

But the eloquent passages of his book (published early in 1697) which I have quoted at the end of the last chapter, concerning the possibilities of Ecuador and Darien, attracted immediate attention. No doubt Dampier

and Wafer,<sup>1</sup> for a year or so before the publication of the first volume of the former's book, made no secret of their views regarding the policy of establishing a great colonial empire in Central and South America. Their theories and reports, coupled with the sensational accounts of the success of many a pirate and privateer between 1686 and 1696, had attracted the attention of a far-sighted Scottish financier, WILLIAM PATERSON. Paterson had already conceived the idea of founding a great Chartered Company, like that which ruled the English East Indies, which should secure a monopoly of Scottish (if not British) trade with Central America, and perhaps parts of West Africa. William Paterson, who had already founded the Bank of England, was a native of Dumfriesshire, where he was born in 1658. It is conjectured that when he was about seventeen he was obliged to leave Scotland owing to his being involved in the religious troubles of the Covenanters, and that he took refuge with a kinswoman at Bristol. From this place he drifted by degrees to the West Indies, and is even said to have been in the service of the buccaneers. He certainly resided in Jamaica, and there apparently made the acquaintance of both William Dampier and Lionel Wafer, and from Wafer derived much of his information about the Darien district. Having made a small fortune in the West Indies, he returned to England, and thence travelled in Holland and Germany. He sought to interest the Great Elector of Brandenburg in a commercial scheme

<sup>1</sup>Lionel Wafer had parted company with Dampier in 1685, and had followed Davis's fortunes instead of Swan's. He settled for a time in New England, but got into trouble there over questions of piracy. He reached London about 1695 and spent the last ten years of his life there. Like Dampier, he gained little or nothing from his splendid adventures, except the power of writing a capital book, which won him some favour from the Duke of Marlborough. He died at the age of about forty-four.

for the development of trade with the West Indies. Meeting, however, with no encouragement, he returned to London, where other projects of his matured in the creation and establishment of the Bank of England in 1694. But he withdrew from the Corporation of the Bank of England in the following year, owing to a difference of opinion with his colleagues, and then turned his attention to the promotion of a Scottish company of the kind mentioned.

The Scots had become envious of the splendid colonial trade of England, in which, before the Union between the two countries in 1707, they had no share. The independent Scots Parliament, therefore, in 1693, passed an Act which should promote a great Scottish Chartered Company to trade with the East and West Indies, the Mediterranean and Africa, &c., a company which as far as possible should squeeze its way into such parts of Asia, Africa, and America as were not clearly appropriated by a foreign power, or by a Chartered Company able to enforce its privileges.

This action on the part of the Scots Parliament was not at all liked in England, where there was no desire whatever to encourage or develop Scottish commerce; and the Act in question did not receive the personal sanction of King William III, who was absent at the time on the Continent. However, Paterson was drawn into the matter and drew up the draft constitution of a possible company, ostensibly to be a company trading with Africa and India. The idea received considerable support from the Scottish ministers of the Crown, and, thanks to their support, it not only passed through the Scots Parliament in 1695, but became law by receiving the approval of the Commissioner of King William and



Queen Mary. This Act gave to the Company a monopoly in Scotland of all trade with Asia, Africa, or America for thirty-one years, besides many other privileges and immunities from taxation.

Having been approved by the Sovereign's commissioner, it had become law; but when its full purport became known in England it aroused the most furious remonstrances and opposition, especially from the House of Lords. The London subscribers withdrew the capital they had advanced, but on the other hand, Scottish national pride being aroused, the people of that nation subscribed the whole of the capital asked for—£400,000.

These preliminary difficulties having been cleared out of the way, Paterson came to Edinburgh in 1696 and submitted to the directors of the Company his great Darien project, which aimed at the establishment of ports under Scottish control on either side of the Isthmus of Darien. Between these ports an overland route would be organized, and over this highway he estimated that two-thirds at least of the commerce between Europe and Asia would be diverted round the route of the Cape of Good Hope, "and Scotland might thus supplant Holland as the great mart of the wealth of the East".

This project must have appeared, even in those days, to be what we should call in modern slang "rather a large order". The King of Great Britain and Ireland was ostensibly at peace with Spain, and the whole of the Darien district was practically acknowledged as part of the Spanish dominions in the New World, whether or not the local Amerindian tribes had accepted the rule of Spain. Not more than 100 miles to the west of the Darien district were situated the great city of Panamá and the long-established overland route between Panamá,

Porto Bello, and Chagres, across which passed several times a year the treasure and the commerce of Peru, Bolivia, and the far-away Philippine Islands. It was scarcely to be supposed for a moment that Spain would allow the establishment of the Chartered Company of a foreign Power in a position of great strategic importance between Panamá on the one hand and the cities of New Granada on the other. In fact, to have supported the Darien enterprise of the Scottish East and West India Company at that juncture would have meant that the British Government must engage in a war with Spain to dismember her American possessions; and this at a time when King William III was endeavouring to keep peace with the dying Habsburg dynasty of Spain, in order that the Crown of these vast dominions might pass, not to the grandson of the French king, but to the House of Austria. Had the Darien project been mooted a few years later, as part of the compact of parliamentary union between England and Scotland, it might have succeeded; for we were then at war with France and the new French King of Spain, and thoroughly unscrupulous, seizing and annexing both Gibraltar and Minorca. But, unfortunately, Dampier's suggestions and Paterson's magnificent project—in many of their features anticipating dreams and ambitions now cherished by the United States—were conceived and born about six years too soon.

The Scottish Company, however, accepted Paterson's scheme, which was to lead to the inauguration of "universal free trade" and the making of the Isthmus of Darien the central market of the world's commerce.

This isthmus, it should be explained, is the easternmost portion of the isthmus of Panamá, and derives its name from the Gulf of Darien on its Atlantic side. Be-

tween Caledonia Bay, in the Gulf of Darien, and the Gulf of San Miguel, on the Pacific side of the isthmus, there is only a breadth of hilly country of between 50 and 60 miles; and the interval between Acanti, on the Gulf of Uraba, and the Tuira River (which falls into the Gulf of San Miguel) is not much broader. The distances between Panamá and the Atlantic coast are, of course, about 20 miles less; but the harbours on both sides of the Darien Isthmus were much superior to those of Panamá and Porto Bello. On the other hand, for the digging of a canal (a project apparently not entertained by Paterson) the Darien country was far more unsuitable, as it was much more hilly. Even in that case, however, the project was not an impossible one, as it might have utilized the courses of navigable rivers.

On 26 July, 1698, the Company's fleet of five vessels, three of them armed like men-of-war, left the port of Leith for Madeira and Central America. On board there were 1200 colonists for the settlement of Darien, and this band was partly recruited from the noble and landed families of Scotland, and comprised, further, some sixty Scottish army officers newly returned from the wars on the Continent. Paterson had got into great difficulties with the Company, owing to his confidence being abused by persons whom he had appointed, with consequent serious defalcations in the Company's funds. Therefore he had been displaced from any official position in the Company. Nevertheless, as he still believed in his scheme, and was most anxious for its success, he joined the fleet as a volunteer, accompanied by his wife, his wife's maid, and his private secretary. As a great deal of cheating had gone on all round, Paterson (in no way to blame himself for these acts of bad faith) suggested that, before the fleet started,

its commodore should have an impartial inspection of the stores carried out, in order to report any deficiency in good time. The commodore snubbed him by saying that he knew his own business best. No such investigation was held, and consequently, after the fleet had been a few days at sea, it was discovered that instead of having nine months' provisions on board, there were only stores for six months for the support of the colonists.

The Portuguese governor of Madeira was very civil to the Scottish fleet, which, without any untoward incident, reached the West India Islands and called at an islet (one of the Virgin group, near Porto Rico) to decide on its ultimate course. Here, by instruction, they opened the last of their sealed orders, and found that they contained instructions to steer for Golden Island, on the Darien coast, off what is now known as Caledonia Bay. On 1 November, 1698, the fleet anchored within half a mile of Golden Island, and the next day there came on board an Amerindian called Andreas, who asked their intentions and professed himself a great friend of several English privateers. He is described as having been of small stature, but of dignified carriage, though only dressed in a loose red coat, an old hat, and a pair of white drawers. This man was very anxious to know whether the leaders of the mysterious expedition were friends of the Spaniard. "We made answer", wrote the secretary of the expedition, "that we had no war with any nation; that if the Spaniards did offer us no affront or injury we had nothing to say to them; but otherwise we would make open war with them." On 3 November the officers of the expedition and all the emigrants landed and took formal possession of the harbour of Acta, which they rechristened Caledonia Bay,

giving the name of New Edinburgh to a long peninsula closing in the harbour on the north. This they soon made into an island by digging a deep cutting to let in the sea. The land on this peninsula was extraordinarily fertile and "full of stately trees fit for all uses, and of pleasant birds". The harbour was estimated to be capable of "containing a thousand of the best ships in the world".

They had not been more than three days at Caledonia Bay before there arrived a canoe containing a Frenchman, two French half-castes, and four Amerindians, besides decked canoes (*periaguas*) with various Indian chiefs on board. The news of the Scottish invasion of Darien spread with great rapidity through the West Indies, alarming and enraging the Spaniards and causing equal consternation amongst the English governors of the West India Islands, who forthwith issued proclamations against the Scottish venture as hostile as though they had emanated from Spain herself. The Amerindians, however, received the colonists with great demonstrations of friendship. Most of their chiefs bore Spanish names; and although they complained bitterly of Spanish raids on their property and on their women, they seemed to be living in considerable prosperity. They were even able to prove in a convincing manner that there were numerous centenarians amongst them, one old woman claiming to be 120 years old. "We were assured that it was common among them to live to 150 or 160 years of age, yet it is observed that those who converse often with the Europeans and drink their strong liquors are of short life."

The colonists entered into a treaty with the most important of the local chiefs, a man named Diego, who had 3000 fighting men under his command and was at war with the Spaniards. Diego's men helped to repulse

a Spanish attacking force which attempted to drive out the Scottish settlers in February, 1699. This force, although finally dispersed by the Indians, inflicted some loss of life on the settlers.

Dutch ships and French ships, however, called at the harbour and saluted the flag of the new colony. Everything for the first few weeks promised well. But before the Spaniard could strike, or the English Government make its displeasure felt, the climate, the germ diseases of this equatorial land, and alcohol<sup>1</sup> commenced their work of destruction. Not many days after the establishment of the colony on Caledonia Bay Mrs. Paterson died of fever. During the eight months that followed nearly 300 persons had perished from fever or dysentery, and such a terror of death from disease seized on the rest of the company that the survivors, about 850 in number, decided to evacuate the Darien Isthmus, the last to be carried on board being Paterson himself. Their ships steered for New York, and some 400 more of the colonists died on the voyage. Of the remainder, about 400 were dispersed over Jamaica, Cuba, and New England.

Paterson reached Scotland, where he presented a long report to the Directors. He was now a bankrupt, both in health and in purse, though he had founded the Bank of England, and had conceived and planned (entirely unselfishly) a scheme which, if properly carried out—and carried out along the lines of his advice—might have been of far-reaching importance for the commerce

<sup>1</sup> The persons who organized the expedition in Edinburgh and arranged the list of its stores were lavish in their supply of rum, brandy, and fortified wines. Paterson himself was practically a teetotaler, but most of the Scottish colonists placed no limit on their indulgence, and in all probability alcohol destroyed more of them than the climate. It should also be mentioned that no less than forty-four of the passengers and crews died on the outward voyage, owing to the shockingly insanitary state of the ships.

of Scotland and England. It is pleasant, however, to be able to record (since he undoubtedly was one of the pioneers of the British Empire in America) that there was autumn sunshine in his life. The first Parliament of Great Britain passed a resolution that Paterson should be recouped in some way for his services, expenses, losses, and public cares. The resolution was not followed at the time by anything practical, but in succeeding years he was just kept alive, as it were, by small grants from Queen's Anne's bounty. During this time he supported himself by teaching mathematics and navigation. At length, however, in the first year of the reign of George I, a bill was passed in Parliament and became law, which awarded to Paterson the sum of £18,241. He lived for four years afterwards, and during the last years of his life wrote several important financial treatises and propounded an admirable scheme for the redemption of the National Debt, which was in a measure adopted by Sir Horace Walpole. "He advocated free trade when others called for protection and monopolies."<sup>1</sup>

Unaware that their first batch of colonists was about to abandon the settlement of Caledonia Bay, owing to hostile proclamations by English West Indian governors and the terrible mortality from disease and alcohol, the Directors of the Company in Scotland dispatched a second expedition of four ships, carrying 1300 men, which left Glasgow on 24 September, 1699, despite the receipt at the last moment of a hurried order from the Directors to delay their departure, rumours having just arrived of the failure of the first expedition.

<sup>1</sup> This and some other remarks are quoted from *A History of William Paterson and the Darien Company*, by J. S. Barbour (Blackwood, 1907); the best amongst the few published works dealing with the affairs of the Darien expedition.

The second fleet reached Caledonia harbour on 30 November, 1699, and found the settlement deserted, the huts burned, the fort demolished, and the ground all overgrown with shrubs and weeds. Great dissensions arose amongst the leaders and the rank and file of the colonists, together with mutinies and desertions. The evil genius of this second expedition was a certain Captain Byres, who, though he scarcely stirred more than a pistol shot from the shore side, declared the whole surrounding country to be worthless, opposed every project—good or bad—for employing the settlers, and finally scuttled off to Jamaica on the pretence of arranging for further supplies. As usual, it was found that the Company had cheated, or been cheated, in the matter of stores. The provisions sent out were mostly worthless, and a large proportion of the cargo of one of the ships consisted of “thin grey paper and blue bonnets”. In the records of this second Darien expedition there was only one bright episode, and that was the behaviour of Captain ALEXANDER CAMPBELL of Finab, who was sent from Barbados by the Directors of the Company to be in command of the colony, and who brought with him a most welcome supply of provisions. He arrived just in time, for two days afterwards a large Spanish force came overland to attack the settlement. Campbell placed himself at the head of a party of 200 able-bodied colonists. They marched for three days through forests and over hills till they reached the Spanish camp, which was strongly entrenched. Campbell gave the order to charge, and with a cheer led the way, sword in hand. His men, armed with hatchets, and assisted by Indian allies, cut down the palisades. The Spaniards fled in confusion, leaving dead and wounded behind. The total loss of the Scots was nine



killed and fourteen wounded, amongst the latter Captain Campbell.<sup>1</sup>

• But this effort was made in vain, for shortly after returning to Caledonia harbour this fighting force and the remainder of the colonists saw their settlement menaced by a powerful Spanish fleet and army which, after laying siege to New Edinburgh for more than a month, secured its capitulation on honourable terms from the wretched Scots, 300 of whom had died of disease.

The four ships sailed away for Jamaica and for the English settlements on the east coast of North America. The survivors of the expedition were crowded together on board and miserably fed, so that at least 250 died on the passage. One of the ships was wrecked, with a loss of all on board. In short, out of the 1300 men who had left Glasgow in September, 1699, there only survived in 1700 about 360, most of whom settled in Jamaica, where they laid the foundations of the prosperous Scottish plantations of the eighteenth century in the West Indies and Guiana.

It has been estimated that the attempt to colonize the Isthmus of Darien cost Scotland nearly 1800 lives and £200,000: but the phrase which follows this statement—"without any tangible return"—is not correct; for the 760 survivors of the first and second expeditions became the parentage of some of the best white blood in those British possessions of Tropical America which may some day, if rightly directed, form a powerful and prosperous confederation.

<sup>1</sup> On Campbell's return to Scotland he was granted by the Scottish Herald a special coat-of-arms in recognition of his bravery on this occasion.

## CHAPTER XII

### British Honduras and Central America

WE have seen that British interest in Central America began with the temptation to plunder Spanish cities and Spanish shipping on the coasts of Yucatan, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panamá, and soon developed into an appreciation of the natural wealth in dyewoods and timber of this remarkable region. Down to the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century all the arduous work of cutting timber, shooting cattle and salting their flesh, preparing hides, navigating ships and paddling canoes, was almost entirely done by white men—Englishmen for the most part—aided occasionally by Amerindians either of British Honduras (the native name of which was Zuina or Mopan) or of Spanish Honduras and the Mosquito coast. But about 1718 Negro slaves were brought over from Jamaica and the Bahamas Islands. It has already been mentioned that the colonists established on Old Providence Island in the Nicaragua sea had transferred themselves about 1646 to a small island in the Bahamas group, which they named New Providence Island, a designation borne to this day by the most thickly populated portion of the Bahama archipelago. But repeatedly the descendants of these colonists sailed their ships over to the tempting coasts of Central America and manned these vessels with sturdy Negroes. Spanish-owned slaves also escaped into the woods of Honduras and mixed with the Amerindian

population, so that to this day there is a good deal of Negro blood in the native races along the eastern side of Central America. At a still later date another element was introduced—the unfortunate Caribs of St. Vincent and other Windward Islands, who had sided with the French against the British, and who were deported at the end of the eighteenth century from their last refuges in this group of the Lesser Antilles to the Ruatan or Bay Islands, off the coast of Honduras, where, much mixed with Negro blood, their descendants remain to this day, a vigorous people, with a promising future before them.

In the constant wars, unofficial more than official, between the British and the Spaniards on the Honduras coast, the Negroes fought on the side of the British with remarkable bravery and fidelity; and throughout the history of British enterprise in this direction there are no sad chapters of slave mutinies, rebellions, or cruelties inflicted by the British on the Negro. The fact is that no direct slave trade between Africa and Honduras took place, and the Negroes carried thither in British ships were of necessity men who had almost forgotten they were in slavery, and who willingly made common cause with their masters. Once arrived on the Belize or Mosquito coast, they were slaves only in name. They chopped logwood and sawed mahogany alongside their British employers, sharing with them the unrestricted life of the backwoods, well fed, armed with cutlasses, and deriving some share of their masters' profits. They had, in fact, absolutely no inducement at that period to rebel against an employment which was quite dissociated from the ordinary circumstances attending slavery.

During the eighteenth century mahogany gradually



C 547

COCKBURN AND THE NEAPOLITAN AMONG THE PIRATES



took the place of logwood as the principal export, the demand for this splendid timber arising from the development of cabinet- and furniture-making in all parts of Europe. The mahogany<sup>1</sup> tree was seldom found in groups or clusters, but singly and much dispersed about the forest region. The growth of the tree is said to be tolerably rapid, so that a seedling may be fit for use as timber after about ten years of growth. It is not, therefore, difficult to keep in check the depredations of the woodcutters by replanting. There were considered to be two seasons in the year for mahogany cutting: the first commencing shortly after Christmas, or at the conclusion of the winter wet season; while the other period was June to August. At such times white men and black men alike worked very hard, recompensing themselves by long periods of idleness and jollity in between. The gangs of Negroes employed in mahogany cutting consisted of ten to fifty in numbers, with one or more white superintendents; but they were usually led and governed by one of their own number, whom they elected as head man or "huntsman".

Such a Negro leader, if intelligent and masterful, might be of great value in the mahogany trade, and be quoted in auction lists of slaves at £500 sale price. About the beginning of August these "huntsmen" would be dispatched to lay plans for the winter cutting. They would travel, usually alone, through the dense forests till they reached some elevated spot, and here, climbing the tallest tree available, would scan the surrounding country with their sharp eyes. At this season the leaves of the mahogany tree

<sup>1</sup> *Swietenia mahogani*, a tall tree of the Meliaceae order, which order includes the "Pride of India" and many other notable trees for timber or foliage in Tropical Asia and America, such as the Cedrela of South America and Nicaragua. Mahogany trees also grow on the larger West India Islands, as well as in eastern Central America.

would have faded to a reddish-yellow colour, making them easily discernible amidst the evergreen foliage of the other trees, so that a sharp-eyed Negro could know and count the approximate number of mahogany trees in any particular neighbourhood, and although quite unable to write, with the marvellous memory of the negro, on his return to headquarters, could make out quite an effective plan of a district, and set forth with tolerable accuracy the number of trees which might be felled. Captain Henderson,<sup>1</sup> who wrote a very interesting account of British Honduras at the beginning of the nineteenth century, said that occasionally, on the return from such a prospecting tour, the "hunter" might be sorely tempted to sell the information he had acquired to some other person than his master, and occasionally such a trick took place, though it was rated as a very low action in the morality of the neighbourhood.

As a rule, however, he was singularly faithful to his employer, and getting his gang of slaves together would start off for the district he had chosen, where he and his men would set to work to fell the mahogany trees. These were usually cut at a distance of about 12 feet from the ground, from a stage which was erected for the axeman to stand on. When, in this way, the top with all its branches had fallen or been lowered to the ground, the tree was cut at its base, the timber of its upper part and of its branches being generally used for different purposes than the main trunk, which of course could be sawn up into broader planks.

On the last day of felling the trees the gang would make

<sup>1</sup> *An Account of the British Settlement of Honduras, &c., and of the Manners and Customs of the Mosquito Indians.* By Captain Henderson, 44th Regiment. London: 1811.

a kind of festival, and as soon as the trees were sawn into logs, and in some cases rough-squared, the slaves would search the woods for game, and also set to work manufacturing a number of small articles from the rejected pieces of timber or branches. These were regarded as their perquisites, and they could dispose of them when they returned to their settlements on the coast.

As soon as the logs of mahogany were ready for transport they were lugged by cattle and trucks to the waterside—never far away from the camp of such a logcutting expedition. When a sufficient number had been gathered at the waterside to form a raft they were flung into the stream and were thus floated down to some point on the river where the mass of timber was held up by cables or ropes tied across the river at the falls. Sometimes more than a thousand logs would be supported by this “boom” of ropes, but occasionally, owing to some tremendous flood resulting from excessive rainfall, such a boom would break and the mahogany then be carried down to the sea in great confusion—confusion often leading to vehement quarrels and disputes, since at these booms across the falls were held up the produce of a number of rival camps. In some way, not explained to us, it was usually possible for each camp to pick out its particular timber, unless the boom should break and the logs be widely scattered. If all went well at the boom the logs were fastened into separate rafts and then sent down the river to their final destination.

When the mahogany was disposed of on the coast of Honduras to the ships that were to carry it away to Europe, it was usually sold at a price varying from £16 to £30 (according to its quality) by the 1000 feet. As the average tree contained about 12,000 square feet of timber, it might, when cut up skilfully, realize a sale price of as much as



£350. Consequently the profits during the eighteenth century on this mahogany trade were sometimes enormous. On the other hand, as against this, the timber cutters had to purchase food, and clothe a large number of specially selected, expensive slaves, supply tools, draught cattle, trucks, and many other things.

An interesting light is thrown on the condition of British and Spanish Honduras in the first half of the eighteenth century, and on Nicaragua also (a region which just missed becoming British) by the travels and adventures of JOHN COCKBURN<sup>1</sup> and five fellow seamen. Cockburn was one of the most remarkable of the pioneers in Tropical America. Though apparently little more than a simple mariner (as he describes himself), yet he possessed a power of observation and a happy choice of language in the putting together of his story equal to the talents of William Dampier, Lionel Wafer, and not a few other British heroes of humble origin and of little more education than that imparted by the grammar school of some small country town. Cockburn had previously sailed to the Levant, and when on the Mediterranean had even visited the Holy Land. At the time of his great American journey he was a married man in England with a small family, and probably about thirty years of age.

On 18 January, in the year 1730, a ship called the *John and Jane* left London for Jamaica, with John Cockburn and his five companions amongst her crew. The *John and Jane* apparently came for honest trade, but in-

<sup>1</sup> See *A Journey over Land from the Gulf of Honduras to the Great South Sea; performed by John Cockburn, and Five other Englishmen, viz.: Thomas Rounce, Richard Banister, John Holland, Thomas Robinson, and John Ballman, &c.* Published in London (C. Rivington), 1735, not long after the return to England of Cockburn.

tended, despite Spanish prohibitions, to visit the coasts of Central America. Off Swan Island<sup>1</sup> the vessel was chased by pirates, and apparently fled before them in the direction of the Bay Islands. One of these pirate vessels was called the *Two Brothers*, and had been built at Rhode Island in New England. It was manned chiefly by Spaniards, but commanded by Captain Johnson,<sup>2</sup> an Anglo-Irish pirate. After severe fighting the captain of the *John and Jane* called for quarter, and ordered his fighting men (only twenty-five in number, and most of them wounded) to lay down their arms. Whereupon they were boarded by the Spanish pirates, sword in hand, who set to work cutting and slashing in the most barbarous manner, stripping all the men stark naked, and preparing to hang them at the yardarm. But Captain Johnson and another Englishman amongst the pirates intervened, and angrily ordered their men to desist.

Amongst the passengers on the ship was an English merchant, Groves, with whom was travelling his wife— young and handsome—“and of a courteous and affable carriage”. Her husband was killed during the engagement, but the lady, being down in the hold, knew nothing of this disaster, which was broken to her by Cockburn.

<sup>1</sup> Swan Island is a pair of minute islets, midway between Jamaica and Honduras, named after Swan, the privateer, described in connection with Dampier. Swan Island is further remarkable for possessing the large Hutia rodent (*Capromys*) and other evidence in favour of its having once been part of the land bridge between Jamaica and Central America.

<sup>2</sup> This Henry Johnson was born in the north of Ireland, and went amongst the Spaniards by the name of “Henriques the Englishman”. He had but one hand, but nevertheless he could fire a musket with great dexterity, laying the barrel upon his left stump and drawing the trigger with his right hand. In most parts of New England heavy rewards were offered for the capture of Johnson, but he always went about with two pistols loaded, ready to shoot himself through the head sooner than be taken prisoner. In the matter of pirates and privateers the Spaniards had by this time—1730—learnt to take a leaf out of their enemies’ book. They employed pirates—renegade English, Irish, American, and Dane—to prey on the ships of the logcutters and contraband traders.

She immediately fell into a swoon, and remained for a long time senseless. Several Spaniards, however, came down with cutlasses and drove her up before them on to the deck, and then in a most brutal manner, stripping the clothes from her back till she was naked, carried her in that condition into their sloop, and handed her over to their captain, who was about to treat her even worse when her shrieks caught the ear of the English pirate, Johnson. Seeing her in such agony and pitiful nakedness his rough disposition was touched, so that he ran stamping about with a pistol in his hand, and swearing that if anyone should dare to treat her in such an inhuman manner, or attempt the least violence upon her, he would shoot him through the head. He then commanded everyone in the vessel to restore what they had taken from her, which they instantly did. He further promised her that all the time she remained with him he would protect her; but nothing was known as to her ultimate fate.

As to Cockburn and ten of his fellow seamen, Johnson, under whose command the ships had now neared the Honduras coast, decided that they should be "marooned" on a little desolate island—called Tiger Island from its abundance of jaguars!—some distance from the Honduras mainland. Here they were followed by a naked man, who was flung on to the strand with a few pieces of dried beef and biscuit. This turned out to be the gunner of the pirate vessel and a Neapolitan, who informed the English seamen in a mixture of Spanish and Italian (which they seem to have understood) that he had been concerned in a great quarrel over the dividing of the plunder, and it had therefore been determined to maroon him also. He exclaimed grievously against the ingratitude of his companions for his past services, and uttered a thousand

bitter curses on himself if he did not speedily find out means to be revenged. He told the Englishmen that he was much better acquainted with the island than they were, and asked if anyone amongst them could swim well. Cockburn replied that he could, and was ready to attempt anything that might lead to the preservation of the party. As to the others, they were most of them so badly wounded that they cared little whether they lived or died. The Neapolitan, accompanied by Cockburn, walked for six hours to the north part of the islet, where they came to a spit of land running far out into the sea towards the continent. But this shallow strait was full of caimans or crocodiles, and about a mile wide. The idea of the Neapolitan was that they should attempt to swim to the mainland, where they would meet other pirates, who might be sufficiently good-natured to come to their assistance. Accordingly, taking each other by the hand, they swam away stoutly, though they narrowly escaped being bitten in pieces by the caimans.

Getting safe to the shore, they found themselves at a place called Porto Caballos, in about 16° N. lat. Passing through a patch of waterside forest they came to a great lagoon. They waded up this shallow water, past great numbers of mangroves, whose roots were thickly hung with oysters. Two newly murdered men were lying on the shore, shown to be English by their faces and dress. Cockburn was full of consternation at this, but was reassured by the Neapolitan, who swore by all that was sacred no man should hurt him. Beyond the mangroves, on an open piece of shore, they saw a large tent, with a great many men lying and sitting and standing round it, with small cannon placed to defend the position. The Neapolitan called out, begging the pirates not to shoot,

and telling his name, which was known to them. Upon the freebooters shouting back some sort of safe-conduct the two naked swimmers marched up arm in arm. The pirates asked "what manner of dog" their Neapolitan acquaintance had brought with him, and upon his replying that he was an Englishman whose ship had just been taken by Henry Johnson, and who had been marooned with twelve others on an island, the pirates immediately fell to cursing and swearing and demeaning themselves "like furies of hell" in their anxiety to shoot Cockburn. But his Neapolitan friend stood by him gallantly. He suddenly snatched a pair of pistols from a Negro, and then swore as vehemently as the others, saying that the first man that offered the least injury to Cockburn he would immediately shoot through the head. He continued to rant until he ended by making the pirates laugh, then, calling for rum and drinking of it plentifully, he fell on his face and went fast asleep, but took the precaution to lie on top of his pair of pistols. Whilst he slept for half an hour Cockburn sat on the trunk of a tree at a little distance, wondering what this crew would decide to do with him.

Nothing being attempted, he had leisure to observe abundance of goods of all sorts lying in confused heaps on the ground, with broken masts, tattered sails, all sorts of ships' tackle, and other signs of rapine and violence. When the Neapolitan gunner awoke he began to swear lustily, trying to persuade some of the pirates to take over a canoe and fetch the rest of the Englishmen who had been marooned on the island. After declaring that they would do nothing of the sort, the pirates gave in, and some of them went off with the Neapolitan to fetch the English mariners. Meantime Cockburn, left alone with the others,

was harshly treated, and was told that if he stirred hand or foot he was a dead man; and was consequently obliged to sit out in the open, naked, the prey of innumerable mosquitoes and great yellow ants, which last bit him to such a degree that he was soon covered with blood. After a time, however, the pirates ordered him to go in a canoe with two of their own men up the lagoon, to fetch water out of casks stored in a huge decked canoe. He carried out these orders and then sat meekly on the outskirts of the camp. Here he got into conversation with some of the Negro companions of the pirates who could speak English. One of them who had been born in Jamaica claimed Cockburn as his countryman, and advised him as a friend to hide himself in the woods, saying that all the pirates would get drunk at nightfall and knock him on the head. However, nothing of the kind happened, and at two o'clock the next morning there arrived all his English companions who had been marooned on Tiger Island.<sup>1</sup>

It was finally decided that their only chance of avoiding death at the hands of these international pirates, or lifelong servitude in the Mexican mines if caught by the Spaniards of Guatemála, was to travel some "two thousand three hundred miles overland" (as they computed it, with great exaggeration, doubling the distance) to Panamá, where there was an English "factory" or place of business in connection with which English ships travelled to and fro on the Atlantic side of the isthmus. (This fact—in vivid contrast to the state of affairs thirty to forty years earlier, when the English could only appear

<sup>1</sup> Of these some died or were murdered very shortly. Thomas Locker and Thomas Robinson survived to travel a short distance with their comrades and then disappeared. Two others, Holland and Ballman, went off south by themselves and eventually joined the others in Nicaragua. Rounce and Banister travelled with Cockburn to Nicoya.

at Panamá as pirates and foemen—was due to the *Asiento* or contract for a trade in slaves from Africa conceded to the British people by the Spaniards in 1713, after the War of the Spanish Succession. Under this *Asiento* or “Royal Assent” to commercial intercourse the British were allowed to send a few ships every year to Spanish America with slaves for sale; and in connection with this slave traffic to have “factories” or places of business at Panamá, Havana, Caraccas, &c.)

Accordingly, Cockburn and his companions (Banister and Rounce) set out on this wonderful walk through Central America, directing vaguely their staggering march (they were stiff with wounds and faint with hunger) towards Comayagua and the pass between the high mountains of southern Honduras at La Paz.

Sometimes their experiences were not unhappy. The Indians were almost uniformly compassionate and kind. Maroon Negroes behaved like the Good Samaritan. Much of Honduras, however, was uninhabited and given over to wild beasts and birds. Howler monkeys (*Myctes*) with sandy beards and bright-red rumps, like baboons, lifted up their sonorous voices. They saw Spider monkeys, merry little “Capuchins” “hanging by their tails on trees”, with flocks of curassows “as big as our swans”, the cocks with combs shaped like coronets. “About sunset, we came to a thicket of fine tall trees bearing fruit as big as an apricot, and yellow as gold; we found abundance of it lying on the ground picked by birds, on which we ventured, and regaled ourselves very delightfully. This seeming a proper place to take up our night’s lodging at, we made our fire accordingly, and rested pretty well that night; in the morning, the trees were covered over with those large birds, and little creatures, no bigger than a

man's hand, with faces perfectly like human kind, which to us appeared very wonderful, nor could we ever learn of what species they were."<sup>1</sup>

More often their experiences were unpleasant, even terrible. As they crossed the narrow pass between the high mountains of southern Honduras, the roaring and miauling of jaguars and pumas, the yapping and yelling of the coyote wolves, scared them dreadfully as night came on. Throughout this journey great prominence is given to the jaguar (miscalled tiger), which seems in those days to have been extraordinarily abundant and bold. Jaguars haunted the seashore, and the banks of rivers and creeks. They thought nothing of taking to the water if it was fresh or brackish (they disliked the sea); and to camp on an islet in a river or estuary was no protection, for the jaguars would at once swim over to attack. Sometimes the lives of these Englishmen were only saved by the bravery of their Indian companions, who pluckily fought the jaguars with their machetes or scimitar-like knives and chopped their paws off. Occasionally the humans would turn the tables and eat the jaguar, whose flesh seemed quite good and savoury. The abundance of these handsome beasts of prey was testified by the presence of their skins in every Indian village, where they were used as rugs and carpets. As to the coyotes, or jackal-like wolves, they were occasionally met with in great packs, even in the daytime, and as far south as Nicaragua. [In Costa Rica, Cockburn noted the presence of small jackal-like dogs, probably *Canis cancrivorus*.] There were rivers to be swum across, with caimans following to bite the traveller in two; there was sometimes the need of travers-

<sup>1</sup> They were probably marmosets of the genera *Hapale* or *Midas*.



ing a broad stream at a dizzy depth below, between two lofty walls of rock, by means of an old, swaying, decaying hammock bridge—an invention common to the Americans of America and the Negroes of West Africa. [These hammock suspension bridges are made of lianas or bush ropes, in a stiffish network. This, of course, has a wide mesh and sways under the weight and impetus of the person crossing it. The present writer can testify to its being a nightmare performance. It is very easy to put one or other foot through the meshes, and the whole structure seems likely to break under the traveller's weight and precipitate him to certain death in the foaming torrent below.]

Sometimes these wretched men would be held up by harsh Spanish officials and be put into foul dungeons, or be nearly starved in the midst of plenty. Of course there were kindly souls here and there in Spanish officialdom, but these were nearly always either friars or Frenchmen, or mulatto gentlemen, or the half-Indian, half-Negro wives of some Spanish governor or alcalde. Strange to say, at numerous points on this amazing journey the English travellers met with fellow countrymen (besides Frenchmen in the Spanish service), Englishmen living amongst the Spaniards under Spanish names and usually as members of the Roman Catholic Church. Such persons would either be former pirates taken prisoners and saved from the gallows to occupy positions of trust and importance, especially when they had joined the Roman Church; or they were simply adventurers who had found their way to this land of fascination, had made themselves pleasant to the Spaniards, married Indian or Spanish wives, and now could scarcely tear themselves away. Usually these Spanish-

Englishmen showed great kindness to their half-starved, ragged, wandering compatriots, who doggedly held on their way till they had crossed Nicaragua, its lake, and its ten-to-eleven-thousand-feet-high mountains on the Costa Rica frontier.

At a town called Nicoya, on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica, they parted company; that is to say, Cockburn, who was unwounded and comparatively healthy, determined to attempt to reach Panamá by sea in a small canoe with five Indians. He was accompanied for a time by a wandering English waif, Barnwell, whom they had picked up on the road, and who died at a later stage of the journey. Cockburn's four companions, Rounce, Banister, Holland, and Ballman, were sent off from Nicoya by the Spanish authorities, and eventually, after much cruel treatment and frightful sufferings, not only reached Panamá, but actually met Cockburn on the other side of the isthmus; and all together sailed for Jamaica. But meantime, starting from Nicoya, Cockburn was to pass through experiences, alone, so terrible and thrilling that they are best given in his own words, with some abbreviations. His canoe was wrecked in a violent storm on the Costa Rica Pacific coast. He and his Indians, after walking some hundred miles, resolved to construct a *balsa* or raft which might enable them to cross a broad gulf of sea and so spare them a circuitous land journey (rendered most dangerous on account of the swarming jaguars). Having finished the raft, his five Indian companions told Cockburn that they would go out hunting with their machetes and thus obtain provisions for the journey. They departed, but never returned. Whether they had decided to abandon the Englishman or whether they were devoured by jaguars Cockburn never ascertained. "The sun went down, dark-

ness came on apace, and no Indians appeared. . . . I suspected myself to be abandoned and forsaken in the most desolate part of this wild country; where, as I had been well informed, were no inhabitants for some hundreds of miles round me. At first I knew not what would become of me, nor indeed whether I thought at all; but when I reflected on the constant good nature of these people in general, I could not think these capable of so great a cruelty, as voluntarily to leave me thus destitute and alone, surrounded with terrors, and exposed to a variety of sufferings; so that, I began to fear they had been surprised and devoured by some wild beasts; which immediately ushered in a hope, that perhaps, they were only detained by them (the jaguars), as we had been before in the tree, and that if so, I should certainly see them again in the morning. Thus between hopes and fears I spent that night; but as soon as the sun arose, not having patience to wait longer, I got up, and followed the tracks of their feet for above a mile, till I came to a great river, where I lost them. Then concluding they had crossed this river, I resolved to do so too in farther search after them; but hearing a great noise of tigers (jaguars)<sup>1</sup> on the other side, and knowing they would enter fresh water, I ran full speed back again to my fire by the seaside, where I sat waiting two whole days and nights afterwards, earnestly offering up my vows for their safe return; but, alas! never more did I set eyes on them.

“Thus after a long series of misfortunes and miseries in company, did I find myself at last singled out from all

<sup>1</sup> Throughout Cockburn's narrative "tiger", of course, stands for jaguar. This creature is always called tiger by the Spanish Americans (jaguar is a Brazilian word), and in parts of central and northern South America it grows to the size of a small tiger. The jaguar type originated in eastern Asia from much the same stock as that which produced tiger, lion, and leopard.

my unfortunate companions, to be the most forlorn and hopeless of them all." . . . (Here follow Robinson Crusoe-like reflections). . . . "Amidst all our former fears, toils, and sufferings, when they happened in common with my fellow travellers, and that we were ready at hand to advise with, and assist each other; I may truly say, that my spirits never once failed me; but how did I bitterly lament my now most calamitous circumstance! At last, by God's grace, I so far prevailed with myself, as to recollect some small share of resolution, that I might not succumb through any fault of my own, wholly relying on the concurrence of Heaven to assist me in what it might be my fate to go through.

"Having thus fortified myself as I could, when all hopes of ever seeing my poor Indians were quite extinguished and gone, I resolved to travel along the seashore while life remained, or till God Almighty should otherwise dispose of me. . . .

"I threw my fishing nets across my naked shoulders, and departed. All the provision I had was a few plantains that remained of those we got on the island, where we rested in crossing Golfo Dolce. I took care to keep as close to the sea as possible, believing no wild beast would venture to attack me near to it. And this I have reason to believe, for one day having strayed a little from the seaside, I observed a tiger (who, I suppose, had dodged me for some time) skulking first behind one tree and then another, and as it were ready to take a spring; . . . but upon discovering his design, I immediately ran and threw myself into the sea, and at the same time observed him to be as expeditious in retiring into the woods, by which I plainly saw that he was, in reality, afraid to come near the sea; so that my fears of those

creatures were thereby much lessened, having the sea to defend me by day, and fire by night.

“I ate so very sparingly of my plantains, lest I should never come at more food, that I soon grew so weak as scarcely to be able to stand on my legs; nevertheless in a short time, they were all consumed, and I durst not go from the sea to seek for other provision. I now began to fall into as great despondency as ever, and, I believe, everyone will think it was not without cause; however, I still kept moving on, for I could not bear the thoughts of sitting down to starve, while I was able to support myself on my feet. Thus I went drooping along, till it pleased God to bring me to a place on the beach, where grew abundance of coconuts; I presently plucked some of them down, and therewith allayed my hunger; but as I had little reason to expect I could travel many leagues, and be still thus supplied, I contrived to pack up as many of them as I could carry, and take along with me. Here the sun darted on me with so scorching a heat, that I was forced to be continually running into the sea to cool me, and every evening before it set, I was employed in making my fire, here being plenty of wood along the coast, which had come down the rivers, and was thrown back again by the sea on the shore, where it lay and dried. This wood blazed like a heap of torches, and though it rained hard every night, yet my fire never went out, but twice, all the time of my being alone. This part of the coast was clear of rocks, and the beach a fine black sand which sparkled like diamonds, having a great variety of fine shells scattered over it.

“As I was walking along one day, in a very contemplative manner, I happened to see a ranch before me, which much revived my drooping spirits, as I hoped

speedily to meet with some Indians; but upon my coming up to it, I found not a creature was there. I saw many prints of men's feet about the ranch, and within it I found a string of tiger's teeth; which, I suppose, the Indians who had lived here, had forgot to take along with them when they left the place. . . . (These teeth I have brought home with my other little things.) Here I stayed, and made a fire to burn off the hard coats of my coconuts, and found that to be the quickest way; for I had been employed many hours before, in dashing them against sharp stones to get their coats off; and besides, I found, that after I used this method, the nut was much wholesomer for the body than before. I flattered myself with hopes, that, perhaps, the Indians might return again to their ranch; wherefore, I took up my night's lodging in it, with that view.

“In the morning I took notice of a heap of sand, which had served me for a pillow while I slept. This I raked up, and found underneath it twelve ripe plantains; but what different transports seized me at this unexpected sight! Inexpressible joy, for that Providence had made this reserve towards the preservation of my life, which seemed, at this time, to be on the point of forsaking me, for want of proper nourishment, and, on the other hand, extreme grief and remorse; for that, after I had so long and greatly experienced the mercies of God towards me, I should still persist in my despondency, and forgetting all past benefits, be ever in doubt of His future protection. After I had refreshed myself with one of these ripe plantains, which is of much higher nourishment than a green one, I then made a strict search after more, remembering, that the Indians frequently bury them in the sand to ripen; but I found no more. . . . While I stayed here, the moon

being in the full, I saw abundance of large turtles come on shore one night to lay. These creatures use the greatest artifice imaginable to conceal their eggs; they come to the top of the beach at low water, and dig a hole about 4 feet deep, and there lay 100 to 150 eggs at one time; after which, they will cover them up so nicely, that the place where they lie shall be as smooth as any other part of the ground round about; so that no one, except he saw them in the action, could have the least token whereby to find their eggs. When they have done thus, they will go a little way off, and make up a hill or two of sand, where they lay no eggs, and by that means deceive the searcher; but when I was let into their secrets, I often proved too cunning for them, and would make bold with their hidden treasures.

“These eggs I could roast quickly in the sand, which, by the constant heat of the sun upon it, glowed like a furnace. Having waited here four days, and finding nobody came, I saw it was in vain to stay any longer in expectation of company, and so set forward once more, while I thought my plantains might be of service to me, and lest the coconuts, which I found on the beach, should fail.

“After my departure from hence, I went on day by day, with little hope of ever seeing the face of mankind more, a dreadful apprehension, which, with many others, . . . drove me almost beside myself; nor was all the courage and resolution, which I sometimes began to think I had acquired, of any significance to allay my fears. . . . It was almost sunset one day when I came to the side of a river, where was plenty of wood, of which I made up two great fires, and placed myself between them; for I had been dogged by two tigers all the day long, but had kept close to the sea; and whenever I perceived them making towards me, I plunged

myself into it, and by that means avoided them. The next morning, I saw great numbers of alligators<sup>1</sup> lie sleeping on the sands, as I had done many times before in travelling round great sand bays. I had often heard say, that these creatures will seize a man on land, but I never found that they endeavoured to make any attempts upon me; on the contrary, as soon as they heard the patting of my feet on the sand, they would make off with great precipitation into the water. This river, which I was now about to cross, was very full of them; but, I thank God, none ever hurt me. In swimming over this river, I miraculously escaped drowning; for the current ran with such force, as drove me out a great way to sea among rocks and breakers, where I lay beating and dashing about a considerable time; and in that condition, could not possibly preserve my nets and bull-hide case, which held my materials for making fire, my knife, and what other small implements I had, besides provisions. All these therefore I lost, after all my efforts to get safe on shore on the other side of the river; where being again on my feet, I reflected on the loss I had just sustained, by which all that I had to depend on in this world was gone, and fell into the utmost sorrow and despair. I bethought myself now, that I could have no more fires, either for my conveniency or defence; in short, the apprehension of the dismal calamities, that must unavoidably fall on me through this irretrievable loss, fixed me down to the earth motionless as a stone; so that I judged it utterly unnecessary to turmoil my weakened body any more, and therefore took a resolution to sit still here, and receive my fate, whether it were that I should be torn in pieces by wild beasts, or whether I should perish to death with hunger.

“Thus I sat expecting a speedy dissolution of my

<sup>1</sup> Caimans (see pp. 156, 158, and 236).



miserable life; when, about noon, to my great astonishment, my nets, with all they contained, were brought safe on shore to me by the waves. How much cause had I then to praise the Giver of all Things! and how was I afterward transported to find that none of my necessities were wanting or damaged, for my case had kept them all dry! By way of caution, I had made it of a hide when I was at Nicoya, before I set out on the unfortunate expedition in the canoes, which I many times bitterly repented of. I attributed all my present misfortunes to my too great impatience of getting home to my own country: whereas, had I contented myself to have stayed with my sick companions, and have shared their fortune, I might have embarked with them for Panamá, and have prevented myself an infinite deal of suffering; but the only thing I can plead in excuse for my hurrying away, was, that I believed they would not allow us all to go in one vessel, and that it would be very uncertain, when those that should be left behind, might have an opportunity to follow them that should go before: But enough of this.

“I shall now return to the thread of my narration. Since Providence had thus restored to me my utensils and provision, I was not backward to employ them to the proper uses for which they were afforded me. I presently made up a good fire and sat down by it to regale myself with my plantains and coconuts; but with much more cheerfulness and thanksgiving than I had done before I was made thoroughly sensible of the want of them. Here I took care to make fresh tinder of wild cotton, which grows plenteously in these parts. Having refreshed myself two or three hours, I began to think it high time to depart, and accordingly took up my nets and set forward; but here was terrible travelling, for the ground was very rocky, and so full of sharp stones, that

I could not set one foot before another without being cut. . . . I now began to draw near some very high cliffs, and a point of rocks which ran out a long way into the sea, which was continually beating over it; and about sunset I came up close to it, but when I saw the sea breaking over it, as we say, mountains high, I found it would be impossible for me ever to get round it, unless it were in a stark calm; however, by the time it was dark I made shift to scramble up to the top of a very steep rock, where grew a tree. This seemed a very convenient situation for me to take up my abode in; for from hence, I could see when an opportunity offered to get round the point, and be all the while sheltered in the tree; wherefore, I mounted it directly and there sat all night. At sunrise the next morning, the weather proved somewhat moderate, which encouraged me to go down, and make an attempt to get round the point, but could not accomplish it by any means; for by this trial I had like to have been dashed to pieces against the rocks, so that I was very glad to desist and return back to my tree.

“Before I came to this place, I had been thirty-three days alone, and having waited three days and nights in the tree, in the bark of which I have cut my name; and all my plantains and coconuts being gone, and no possibility appearing of my ever being able to get past this dreadful point, I concluded for certain, that this was the place Providence had directed me to, to end my days at, though now and then some faint glimmerings of hope, would, as it were, dawn upon my sinking spirits.

“This tree, my habitation, was about 100 feet distant from the sea, and I have been sometimes four hours and more getting up and down the rock whereon it grew, as I have taken notice by the sun. As I sat in it one evening, I saw a creature come on shore on a sandy bay out of the sea, about a musket-shot from me; the upper

part of which was somewhat like a horse, the head, neck, and part of the body being, as well as I could discern, shaped like the same parts of that noble creature, but the hind part was in the nature of a fish. It had flat feet, with which it waddled along the shore, and the next morning I saw it take to the sea again. This creature seemed to me, as big as any four horses put together. (Probably the Sea-elephant, *Macrorhinus*, a gigantic seal with a short proboscis in the male.)

“Though my situation was none of the lowest, yet above me were very high mountains; the tops of which appeared towering one behind another up to the clouds; and from thence descended to me the voices of all manner of wild beasts, the water at the same time pouring down from them with great violence; which, together with the raging of the sea against the cliffs, afforded but a melancholy scene to a lonely disconsolate man, already on the point of being starved to death. Now I had observed a narrow cavity or chink in the rocks, where I could not only discern light, but could also behold the sea through it flowing on the other side. I considered that if I could compass to get through this passage, it would save me the labour and hazard of going round the point, if ever an opportunity should offer for that purpose; wherefore I began the attempt immediately, and pushed on a good way, but at last the passage grew very narrow, and I found great difficulty in pressing forward; nevertheless, I made so vigorous an effort to succeed in my undertaking, that I at last got my head stuck so fast between the rocks, that I never expected to get clear again, and in this condition I lay struggling and labouring a long time before I could disengage myself. By this one trial, I perceived it was impracticable to force my passage that way; therefore, when I was loose I gave over the attempt, and returned to my station in the tree.

“In this tree, though overwhelmed with sorrow, have I sometimes lain and slept as profoundly as ever I did in my life, and dreamed of conversing amongst my former friends and acquaintance; but when I have awaked, and seen no possibility of ever doing so in reality, nor even so much as of exchanging a word with any of my fellow creatures again, I have cried out aloud, that surely no state of life was ever comparable to this of mine; and yet, wretched as it seemed, my desires of prolonging it were so powerful, that I had determined to return and linger out the remainder of my days among the coconuts I mentioned before; but when I considered, that this could not be done without once more crossing the river, which had like to have proved so fatal to me, this thought vanished. Thus I sat deliberating two whole days, whether I should run the risk of my life that way, or stay here and assuredly perish; but at the end of this time, the weather proved calm and serene, and the sea began to appear as smooth as glass. This I beheld with transport from the rock, and made no doubt, but this was the time offered for my deliverance, and therefore taking a hasty leave of my tree, which had sheltered me five nights, I went as near to the point as possible, and waited till the sea was out; then, humbly begging of Providence to be my guide and assistant, I fastened my nets to my back, lest they should be washed away as before, and committed myself to the sea, and swam from rock to rock, till I was almost spent, and often near drowning by means of my nets. I was four hours, as I computed by the sun, in getting round this dismal point, after which I came on a deep sandy bay; on the other side of which, about 10 leagues off, was another great point, which ran as far into the sea as that I had lately passed. From this bay I came on a fine strand, but could find no coconuts, nor anything to satisfy hunger.

“At this time I was not only extremely weak through

want of food, but was also very much bruised and cut, by being beat and dashed against the sharp edges of the rocks. . . . I called to mind in what manner I had seen the turtles lay their eggs; but as I knew there was no finding them out by any marks on the sand, I got a long stick and struck it into it, in several places, till at last it came up with part of a yolk sticking at the end of it, by which I concluded there was a nest, and so raking away the sand, I found ninety eggs. These I put up in my nets, and then walked away to seek for water, without which my eggs were of no service to me. About noon I came to a great river, where after I had allayed my thirst, I sought about for wood to make a fire; but whilst I was busied in this, I spied a wigwam on the other side the river; upon which instead of minding my fire any longer, I ran and catched up my nets, and swam across to it, and then had the mortification to find nobody near it. Looking about without side the wigwam I saw an arrow sticking in the sand at one end of it, and within I found a net hanging with two ripe plantains in it, which I made bold to eat. These apparent signs that some Indians had lately been here, together with the wigwams being new, inspired me with hope, that the longing desire I had had of coming amongst men once more, would shortly be gratified. Then I looked about for the tracks of their feet, which I followed till they led me to the side of a wood, where I found another wigwam, and a fire with an earthen crock full of plantains and wild hog boiling on it. Without so much as considering what I was about to do, I presently took the victuals off the fire, and ate so eagerly of it, that I thought I could never be satisfied. Never had I met with such delicious fare, as this seemed to me at that time, not having tasted anything for above forty days, but coconuts and plantains; nor durst I for several reasons venture to eat my fill of them, the first ill agreeing with

my constitution, and the latter I was obliged to be sparing of, as I knew not when I should come at more.

“When I had ate thus plentifully of this welcome diet, I instantly fell into a fast sleep, without any fears of what I had done, and did not wake till near sunset, but still no one came. Then I began to consider, that I was got to a remote and uninhabited part of the country, and that the Indians who had wandered hither might be people of very different dispositions, from any I had yet met with; and that if they were not of the cannibals, which I had heard much talk of, yet probably they were such as had little notions of humanity, or at least might not once have heard there were such men in being as the Europeans; and that, perhaps they might have seen me before I crossed the river, and imagining I had company with me, and was come to surprise them, had therefore fled away in haste, and left their provisions behind them; and that if so, it would be impossible for me ever to set eyes on them. Full of these and many other melancholy reflections, I went into the wigwam to see what discoveries I could make among the bundles of leaves I had seen there, and in these I found barbacued hog, ripe plantains, pepper, and several sorts of berries, which were all very carefully wrapped up, to keep them from water and vermin.

“Soon after I had gratified my curiosity this way, came a dog leaping and jumping upon me with tokens of great joy; this put me in great hope, that I should shortly see his master, or those he belonged to; wherefore, I looked about me on all sides, and at last saw three Indian men coming down by the side of the river. How did my heart leap for joy at the sight of human kind once more, though I knew not what might be the consequence of this interview. Soon as they saw me, they made a full stop, as if in surprise, and then seemed to enter into debate, whether they should come forward, or turn back again. At last I

took courage and beckoned to them; upon which, one of them, who was an old man, came up to me, and shook me by the hand. I asked him of what Indians they were, and if he could speak Spanish? He said, they were Indians of Burica, and that he could speak a little Spanish; then he called to the other two, who were young men, bidding them come to him, which they did. After this he spread a skin on the ground, desiring me to sit down in a civil and friendly manner. Now I thought myself happy indeed, and had the courage to confess how free I had been, in their absence, with their victuals. He answered, that he was very glad I had done so; for he judged by my aspect, that I had great need of it. Then he ordered the young men to make supper ready, which when they had done, he urged me to eat heartily again, and to drink freely of their liquor called *cheely*, which is made of several sorts of berries, and is so strong that it will intoxicate a man.

"After supper he began to enquire how I came into this part of the country, and of what nation I was, for he was certain I was no Spaniard; upon which, I frankly owned to him, that I was an Englishman. He said, he had heard much of such men, and had seen some of them when a little boy, and that he loved them better than the Spaniards; for they, said he, shaking his head, 'would kill me'. This man, as I said, was old and hoary-headed, and through long experience, was well acquainted with all parts of the country.

"I now began to relate to him my story; and when I came to the part of it, where the five Indians left me, and never returned, he asked, if they took their bows and arrows with them. I told him no; for they were washed off the *balsa*, when we crossed Golfo Dolce. Then, he said, they must undoubtedly have been ignorant of those parts; for otherwise, they would not have ventured up into the country with their machetes only, adding, that they were cer-

tainly devoured. Then I went on to tell him how I had lately passed the point, by swimming from rock to rock; at which he seemed amazed, saying, it was more than any Indian had ever done; for they, he said, always made a *balsa* to get round it, when they were a good many in company, one man not being able to manage that alone. This point he called Point Burica,<sup>1</sup> and said, that I must have travelled a great way farther along the seacoast, had I not met with them, before I could have come to any inhabitants, the nearest being those of Chiriqui."

His new friends offered to escort him to the district of Chiriqui as soon as he was sufficiently restored to health to traverse the very high ranges of mountains which here formed the water parting between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

"The better to enable me to travel with them, the old man made me bathe the wounds I had received in fencing with the rocks, with a juice he had squeezed from certain herbs, and after they had nursed me up for two or three days, by the help of God, I grew much better. The two young men were inclined to come into a great intimacy with me, and wanted to know if I could shoot with bows and arrows; but I made them understand, as well as I could, that in my country they made use of guns only, and that therefore I was entirely unskilled in the management of bows and arrows. But to show me how dexterous they were at them, they would often shoot a small bird flying, or pecking on the ground at a great distance. I have seen them stand, perhaps 100 yards from a bird on the ground, and mount their arrows directly up into the air, so as to fall down again exactly on the bird, and stick it to the earth. And as a farther instance of their ingenuity this

<sup>1</sup> A name it still bears on the frontiers of Panamá and Costa Rica. Cockburn, it may be mentioned, greatly exaggerated his distances. From the spot where he lost his five Indian companions to Point Burica he probably only travelled 100 miles.





## British Honduras—Central America 317

Nicaragua, he and many of his men suffered terribly from fever, and there were many deaths. The British Government showed itself more concerned, therefore, to regularize the British claims over northern Honduras than to take possession of the possible route of an interoceanic canal.

The subsequent history of British Honduras may be briefly noted here. After a whole century of attacks and reprisals on the part of Spaniards and British, a partial settlement of jarring interests was effected in 1783-4, as a result of which the British agreed to modify their claims to the Mosquito shore, but were allotted by Spain a good deal of what is now British Honduras. Nevertheless, the Spaniards reserved their sovereign rights over this coastline, and forbade the erection of any fortifications. In 1796 the British resumed their occupation of the Ruatan or Bay Islands (partly in order to deposit the St. Vincent Caribs there) and apparently at the same time enlarged their claims to the Mosquito shore. In 1798 Spain, being at war with England, attempted to reconquer British Honduras; but the armada sent for that purpose was most signally defeated by the desperate bravery of the British settlers and their Negroes. From this time onwards it may be considered that it became definitely a British colony. Till 1884 it was more or less associated with the government of Jamaica, but in that year was made a separate government, dependent only on Great Britain.

Great Britain foolishly and needlessly surrendered her protectorate on the Mosquito coast to Nicaragua in 1856, and in 1859 ceded the Ruatan or Bay Islands, and control over the Black Caribs, to the disorderly Republic of Honduras, thus sacrificing much that had been won by the seventeenth-century pioneers, and repudiating responsibilities in regard to Amerindian tribes of one to two hundred years' duration.

## 318      Pioneers in Tropical America

The ultimate history of British Guiana has already been touched on in connection with Raleigh's work. It may be noted, briefly, that since Raleigh's voyages and futile attempts to secure Guiana and Trinidad for the English the possibilities of including these regions in the British Empire were never quite lost sight of, and for all practical purposes the western half of Guiana and the Island of Trinidad had become British possessions in 1797. The little settlement of New Providence Island, founded in 1646, when Old Providence Island, near Nicaragua, had been recovered by the Spaniards, grew during the eighteenth century into a British colonization of the whole of the Bahama archipelago, which, with its almost uncountable islands, islets, and rocks, constitutes an area of 5450 square miles, much of which is suited to settlement and cultivation, not only by the coloured people, who are the descendants of the slaves imported by the British, but also by a White race. In addition to the Bahamas, the Turks and Caicos Islands were also placed about the same time under the British flag.

One of the oldest of our colonies, Barbados, a rather isolated island of 166 square miles, lying to the east of the Windward Islands, was colonized in 1626, and never thenceforth passed away from British occupation. The enterprising and independent breed<sup>d</sup> of White and Black colonists to which it gave rise played a considerable part in the extension of British dominion over Tropical America, and led to the colonization and conquest during the eighteenth century of the Windward Islands—St. Vincent (1763), Grenada (1762), and St. Lucia (1803)—the first and last of which were mainly conquered from the Caribs, the survivors of whom were deported to British Honduras. In 1759—and again, after a brief episode of French invasion, in 1783—the British also conquered from the French the comparatively large Island of Dominica, between

Guadelupe and Martinique. The first island colonized in the Leeward group had been St. Christopher or St. Kitt's, in 1623. Although driven away by the Spaniards at one time, and threatened by the French at another, the British stuck to this island, and from it extended their power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries over the other Leeward Islands—Anguilla, Barbuda, Antigua, Nevis, and Montserrat. The Virgin Islands, lying due east of St. Thomas and Porto Rico, were acquired in 1666.

In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and throughout the eighteenth, the British West Indies and Guiana were flooded with Negro labour. Probably several millions of Negroes were imported into the West Indies—chiefly from the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, Dahomé, the Niger delta, and the Congo. A large proportion of them died from ill usage, overwork, starvation, or disease; but it is a race very difficult to kill, and when the conscience of the British nation brought about, first, the cessation of the slave trade, and, secondly, in 1833, the abolition of slavery, these Negro colonists of British Tropical America began to prosper and to increase in numbers, and now amount to a Black and Yellow population of a million and a half, while the White population of all British Tropical America is only between seventy and eighty thousand. But the recent advances of natural science and the application of medical precautions and remedies have very greatly improved the health conditions of British Tropical America in regard to Europeans, and many parts of this portion of our empire—which in Honduras, Guiana, and the West India Islands amounts to an area of nearly 112,000 square miles—are suited for White colonization, and might produce and maintain a vigorous English-speaking people of Anglo-Saxon origin. The opening of the Panamá Canal will add enormously to the value and importance of British Tropical America.

In surveying its past history we may indeed deplore the chances we have missed, the opportunities again and again placed before us by Fate for the foundation of British colonies in Nicaragua and Darien, colonies which, as events turned out, would have done no harm to Spain—who was destined to lose all control over these sparsely populated, badly governed dependencies—and might have rivalled, in course of time, in wealth, population, and productiveness, the British possessions in Asia. British intervention at this period would certainly have gone far to preserve that Amerindian race, the rapid disappearance of which will probably be found to have been a great loss to Tropical America. But these regrets for our failure to follow the indications of the great pioneers of the past may at least stimulate us to a far greater interest at the present day in British Tropical America, and a resolve that no carelessness of policy shall prejudice its future welfare from the point of view of its White, Black, and Yellow populations; while the remembrances of the way in which our pioneers were from the very first helped in their grievous difficulties by the native Amerindians of Tropical America should enlist our national sympathies on behalf of this human race, which is still being grievously maltreated by the descendants and successors of the Spaniards.

